“THAT’S NOT HEAVY METAL”:

EGALITARIANISM, ELITISM, AND WINNING ARGUMENTS

IN THREE METAL MUSIC STUDIES CANONS

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University
May 2023

Accepted by the Graduate faculty, Indiana University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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April 25, 2023

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This dissertation is dedicated to Dr. Esther Clinton (1971–2022), who one day in Bowling Green was kind enough to sit with me and talk metal. Her kindness is not forgotten.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not exist without the help of countless people. I apologize to anyone I have forgotten to thank here; I invite anyone left out to demand acknowledgement if merited.

Peter Burkholder, who took me on when I was lost, provided more encouragement, sage feedback, and time editing than I surely deserved. He is a rare and remarkable person. I am eternally grateful to be his eighteenth successful advisee.

Judah Cohen made himself available for meetings whenever I asked and helped me resist oversimplification. My document improved significantly because of his input. Ayana Smith always asks the best questions. I aspire to be as thoughtful and clear as she is. Kyle Adams stepped in at the last minute in an emergency and asked the question that needed to be asked at my defense. He has my utmost respect.

Phil Ford gave generously of his time and intellect throughout my IU career. I am grateful for his advice to "just do Bourdieu." David McDonald, more than a decade ago, told me to be critical of metal studies. He has my thanks for that. Jeremy Wallach went out of his way numerous times to help me when I was a young metal scholar; he is a golden god. Helen Greenwald, Rebecca Cypess, and Robert Labaree ushered me into musicology while I was at New England Conservatory; I thank them all.

Amanda Jensen did a herculean amount of editing on this document. It is far more intelligible and has far fewer errors than it did before her help. I hope she never has to tell me to break a sentence into two sentences or to clarify ever again. Patrick Domico is my Wednesday night writing stalwart; I look forward to keeping the tradition alive to help him finish his dissertation. Kate Altizer, David Rugger, Daisy Chew, Caitlin Brown Hersch, Aaron Riedford,

Kirby Haugland, Christine Wisch, Elektra Voyante, Stewart Duncan, Dikshant Upretty, Fielder Valone, Martin Law, Jason Eck, and surely others I'm forgetting made Bloomington more welcoming and interesting. Chris Connors was cool enough to attend my defense. Dan Hirschman pointed me to useful sociology texts and sent me enough scholarly metal articles to make me feel seen. Rebecca Nederhiser gave up a bassoonist so I could finish. Despite being severely overworked, she managed to ask me how my dissertation was going whenever our paths crossed. I owe her some concerts.

My parents, Bob and Denise Landes, have given me everything. I am so happy I could make them proud. Drs. Vanessa Landes and Ahsan Javed got their PhDs well before me; I am grateful for the pressure that created to not be the only one at holiday gatherings without a PhD. They are also unendingly kind and generous people, and I am grateful to be related to them. All of the Dorans are A+ people, and I am honored they have welcomed me into their clan.

Molly Doran is my forever person. Thank you, Molly, for putting up with me during this process, and for your help editing and listening to presentations. And for adding to the pressure to be a Dr. at family gatherings.

And last, to Vivi and Jack, for being my reason to get up every day and be the best version of myself that I can. I love you both endlessly.

Nathan Landes

"THAT'S NOT HEAVY METAL": EGALITARIANISM, ELITISM, AND WINNING ARGUMENTS IN THREE METAL MUSIC STUDIES CANONS

From the late 1980s to the 2000s, scholars in the academic discipline of metal music studies formed three canons in order to win scholarly arguments; I call these canons the Early Metal Studies Canon, "Serious" Extreme Metal Canon, and "Metal-as-Global-Culture" Canon. Scholars use these canons to defend metal music from its detractors, and they build their canons around the epistemological standards of the primary academic disciplines to which these scholars belong. The need for an academic defense of metal was established by scholars like Deena Weinstein and Robert Walser who created the Early Metal Studies Canon due to attacks on metal from other scholars, rock journalists, and political figures in the 1980s. Scholars who devised the latter two canons in the 2000s adopted this defensive stance as a convention, as there was no meaningful threat to metal at that time. The "Serious" Extreme Metal Canon, which draws from scholarship like Keith Kahn-Harris's *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*, portrays metal music as complex art to defend it against those who would dismiss it as shocking noise. The "Metal-as-Global-Culture" Canon, an outgrowth of scholarship like that found in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene's *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World*, portrays metal culture as resisting global forces that homogenize difference and suppress dissent. The two canons from the 2000s also had a secondary goal of promoting extreme metal, a collection of metal subgenres that feature complex music and transgressive

lyrics and imagery. Non-scholar fans of extreme subgenres tend to promote their preferred music by marginalizing non-extreme subgenres. Further, some forms of extreme metal have adherents who are openly discriminatory toward marginalized identity groups, meaning that certain bands and fans of metal are excluded not only for their musical preferences but for their genetics or the circumstances of their birth. Scholars of the latter two canons almost exclusively reject discriminatory behavior, opting to take an ambivalent stance that praises the music while criticizing the objectionable politics. However, these scholars still overemphasize the importance of extreme metal and deemphasize non-extreme metal, either because they are fans of extreme metal or because they wish to produce scholarship that aligns with the stylistic preferences of metal studies for professional benefit. Due to the exclusionary nature of extreme metal and how it impacts arguments in metal studies, I propose that metal scholars should canonize bands that are musically significant and that model the egalitarian and inclusionary stance of the International Society for Metal Music Studies. In my conclusion I canonize Rage Against the Machine as an example of a band whose members are ethnically diverse and whose lyrics and imagery are anti-oppression.

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Introduction

How I Got into Metal Scholarship, and How to Get Out

In the late 2000s in Boston, I was a conservatory graduate student in a class titled "Writing about Music," where I was tasked with writing a paper about a musical topic of my choice. With no knowledge of relevant scholarly discourses or published scholarship, I chose to write my paper on heavy metal, both because I was a fan of the music and because I did not want to verbalize about the music of the Western canon after playing it for hours every day. While I remember little of that paper (except that it was poor), I do remember my first engagement with Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*.[1] I now understand that Walser's book is a revered classic in several scholarly fields, but at the time my reaction to the book was one that Walser essentially predicted: I thought "Van Halen isn't metal."[2]

My belief that Van Halen was not metal stemmed not from malice toward the group—I was a huge fan of them in high school and learned some of their songs on guitar in college—but from their being labeled as "hard rock" on radio stations in southern New England where I grew up and by my friends who were listening to heavier bands like Slipknot and Metallica. I thought I was innocently categorizing the band in the correct fashion. However, I came to learn from Walser that Van Halen was one of the bands at the center of a debate among metal fans in the late 1980s about what counts as metal music. Walser taught me that

> "heavy metal" is a term that is constantly debated and contested, primarily among fans but also in dialogue with musicians, commercial marketing strategists, and outside critics and censors. Debates over which bands, songs, sounds, and sights get to count as heavy metal provide occasions for contesting musical and social prestige. "That's not heavy

[1] Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2014).
[2] Van Halen wrote the song "Runnin' with the Devil" (1978) from which Walser derives his book title.

> metal" is the most damning music criticism a fan can inflict, for that genre name has great prestige among fans. But genre boundaries are not solid or clear; they are conceptual sites of struggles over the meanings and prestige of social signs.[3]

Walser's passage on the contested boundaries of what counts as metal describes something that I saw in the early 2000s with nü metal bands like Korn and Limp Bizkit, who were the definition of metal music as far as MTV was concerned but were maligned by certain fans who took denouncing Korn and Limp Bizkit very seriously. Walser's description of gatekeeping in the metal community fascinated me because it showed that genre categorization is not just a series of facts to memorize for tests or cocktail party conversations but a living debate among metal fans. Talking about metal mattered, and *the way* people talked about metal mattered, because it defined who got to participate in the metal community.

When I entered the musicology PhD program at Indiana University, I intended to write a dissertation on gatekeeping in the metal community. Remnants of this intent are apparent in my Chapter 3. Given my proclivity for leftist politics and egalitarianism, I needed to understand why bands like Van Halen, Korn, and Limp Bizkit were so often excluded from the boundaries of metal music, and decided that the process of gaining this understanding would render a suitable dissertation. However, my encounters with the work of Pierre Bourdieu and the confusion I developed during my coursework over the lack of unifying epistemological values in musicology led to a need to understand the motivating drives of academics. This dissertation is, in large part, a personal effort to better comprehend my home discipline of musicology through analyzing the work of the various disciplines that contribute to metal scholarship. Though this comparative analysis is often implicit, my identity as a musicologist ensures that on some level all of my scholarly work is about understanding what musicology is and how to be a musicologist.

[3] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 4–6.

The idea to focus on canons arrived somewhat serendipitously. A number of years ago I told the parent of a guitar student of mine that I was doing Bourdieuan work on metal music, and the parent responded, "Oh, you need to look up John Guillory." He was correct: as with the actively contested boundaries of metal, Guillory's theory of canonization in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* presented me with a tool for analyzing scholarly activity based on the choices these scholars made every day in their teaching and publications.[4] The way academics present music in scholarship and the classroom matters because their presentation serves as a form of gatekeeping, and the boundary in question is whether a work matters in the context of receiving a university education or participating in the world of metal scholarship. This focus on canons also led me to engage with any number of remarkable but decades-old musicological writings on canons from scholars like Joseph Kerman, Marcia Citron, and those in Katherine Bergeron and Philip Bohlman's edited collection *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons*. I hope my work is part of a meaningful revival of the focus on canons in musicology.[5]

The most significant contribution of this dissertation is its establishment that it matters when fans talk about metal and scholars canonize metal bands and music. The actions of fans and scholars have an impact on what counts as relevant and who gets to participate in the metal and scholarly communities. Metal scholars are both fans and scholars, and they gain and create knowledge that informs their experiences in both metal and scholarly cultures. The activities of metal scholars in both parts of their hybrid lives actively establish the boundaries of what counts

[4] John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
[5] Joseph Kerman, "A Few Canonic Variations," *Critical Inquiry* 10 (September 1983): 107–25; Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons*, ed. Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). I talk about a seeming resurgence of interest in canons in Chapter 1.

as valid metal and as valid scholarship; just as metal scholars have the power to perpetuate the canons of previous generations, they also have the power to change them simply by writing and talking about other metal music. Unfortunately, as will be shown in the chapters that follow, metal scholarship overwhelmingly focuses on subgenres of metal music with fan bases that promote elitism and that maintain the most restrictive boundaries of participation in the metal community.

The subtitle of this introduction, conspicuously borrowed from Joseph Kerman's classic essay "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get out," indicates my alignment with the need to "get out" that Kerman speaks of when he discusses the role of analysis in musicology.

> The great German tradition of instrumental music, which analysis supports, no longer enjoys the unique status it did for the generation of Schenker and Tovey and Schoenberg. There is no need to enlarge on the various factors that have so drastically changed the climate for the consumption and appreciation of music today: the wide variety of music made available by musicological unearthings on the one hand and recording technology and marketry on the other; the public's seemingly insatiable hunger for opera of all sorts; the growing involvement with non-Western music, popular music, and quasi-popular music; and also a pervasive general disbelief in hierarchies of value. It is not that we see less, now, in the German masters; but they no longer shut out our perspective on great bodies of other music, new and old.[6]

Just as musical interest inside and outside the academy was extending beyond the narrow confines of the German instrumental tradition into a number of other musical spheres, metal music has a diversity of styles and communities that merit scholarly study. What I ultimately want for metal scholarship is for metal scholars to get away from the need to talk about these subgenres of metal music associated with exclusion and elitism simply because it is what other scholars have historically thought is important. In the chapters that follow, I hope to convince other metal scholars that they too should embrace an egalitarian stance about what counts as

[6] Joseph Kerman, "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 319.

canonizable metal so that metal scholarship can document the full spectrum of metal music, rather than an elite portion with a legacy of prestige in the academy.

Chapter 1

Canonization and Cultural Capital in Metal Studies

"Intellectual life is first of all conflict and disagreement."[1] – Randall Collins

My dissertation considers three instances of metal canon formation in the academic discipline of "metal studies" to argue that academics primarily formed these canons not to understand metal music but to win arguments. Winning arguments cements the scholar's importance in metal studies, and sometimes beyond, and allows them to advance professionally. While these canons may create understandings of metal, these understandings will inevitably be partial and heavily focused on the bands, fans, texts, and other elements of metal culture that help win arguments of contemporary importance in the metal studies community. The professional and cultural demands of being a competent metal scholar have a significant impact on metal studies canon formation, both in terms of what is included and excluded.

The three canons, whose names I have invented to reify them for discussion, are as follows:

1. The Early Metal Studies Canon
2. The "Serious" Extreme Metal Canon
3. The "Metal-as-Global-Culture" Canon

The Early Metal Studies Canon, which I will refer to henceforth for convenience and brevity as the first canon, was formed in the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to attacks on the integrity of metal music on a number of fronts. Many but not all of these challenges to metal arose due to moral panics surrounding obscenity in music in the 1980s that culminated in United

[1] Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 1.

States Senate hearings on the government's role in warning parents about obscenity.[2] The first front was a political front, exemplified by the activities of the Parent's Music Resource Center (PMRC). A conservative advocacy group comprising the wives of prominent government officials including Tipper Gore, the PMRC sought to warn parents about the dangers of heavy metal and other popular music. The second front was academic: prior to the emergence of the first canon, the majority of academic work on metal was done by psychologists who emphasized metal's negative impacts on adolescents and the need for parental awareness.[3] The third, and perhaps most unexpected, was rock journalism: rock critics, potential allies to metal given they write about and appreciate any number of similar musics, denounced metal music as adolescent or "Cro-magnon," implying the music had not fully developed into homo sapiens adulthood.[4] It was in this environment that the earliest metal studies scholars, though they were not known as such at the time, sought through various means and epistemological stances to defend metal from its detractors.

The "Serious" Extreme Metal Canon, the second canon, formed in the early 2000s to promote the musical and cultural seriousness of extreme metal music. The use of seriousness as a tool for canonization is hardly unique to the second canon; Celia Applegate argues that the nineteenth-century German musical community forged a unified musical identity around educated musical behavior and a canon of serious works that were linked to German nationalism.[5] In their introduction to *Metal Rules the Globe*, Harris M. Berger, Jeremy Wallach,

[2] See "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," *CSPAN*, September 19, 1985, https://www.c-span.org/video/?69484-1/rock-lyrics-record-labeling.
[3] Andy R. Brown, "Heavy Genealogy: Mapping the Currents, Contraflows, and Conflicts of the Emergent Field of Metal Studies, 1978–2010," *Journal for Cultural Research* 15 (2011): 226–229.
[4] Deena Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 2.
[5] Celia Applegate, "How German Is It?: Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century," *19th-Century Music* 21 (1998): 274–96.

and Paul D. Greene argue that "despite significant differences across national and regional metal scenes . . . *all* metalheads, regardless of their preferred subgenres, view metal as the opposite of light entertainment."[6] This canon emphasizes that extreme metal is innovative, complex, and, to quote respected metal studies scholar Keith Kahn-Harris, "artistically challenging."[7] Further, it locates these features within specific aesthetics of extreme metal with the term "transgressive," which describes not only the music but the shockingly violent and/or Satanic lyrical and visual content produced by bands. By establishing that extreme metal has traits seen as serious in other musical traditions, metal studies scholars of the second canon bolster the value of extreme metal and defend it from conservative attackers and those who claim that its works are essentially "formless noise."[8] However, the second canon also shows elitist tendencies, and non-scholar partisans of extreme metal frequently declare other forms of metal to be "not metal"; I link these tendencies to those displayed by nineteenth-century German nationalists and twentieth-century musicologists.

The "Metal-as-Global-Culture" canon, or the third canon, focuses on heavy metal as a global cultural phenomenon. Forming slightly after the second canon, the third canon is united by certain values ranging from a shared transnational identity that resists global forces and local norms to an affinity for the intense and powerful aesthetic Wallach, Berger, and Greene dub "affective overdrive."[9] It presents some of the most innovative metal music because it takes special interest in bands that incorporate local or regional musical elements from traditions on the peripheries of power in the metal world.[10] It draws heavily on the methodologies and

[6] Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, "Affective Overdrive, Scene Dynamics, and Identity in the Global Metal Scene," in *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World*, ed. Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 8.
[7] Keith Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* (New York: Berg, 2007), 6.
[8] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 5.
[9] See Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 7–19.
[10] The centers being primarily Anglophone countries, Norway, and Sweden.

epistemologies of anthropology, ethnomusicology, and folklore studies, and as a result promotes the cultural output of marginalized people and their resistance to oppressive cultural forces. While it does all these things in a manner that indicates a commitment to egalitarianism, it interestingly continues the trend established by the second canon of disproportionately canonizing extreme metal bands; this indicates a deemphasizing or ignoring in third canon scholarship of the elitist and exclusionary elements of extreme metal culture.

What I Mean by Argument

When I say scholars formed these canons to win arguments, I am not saying the canonizing scholars were behaving in a hostile, combative manner. Rather, I use argument in the sense of a philosophical or legal argument that proposes a set of premises and a conclusion that stems from them. In this way, canons can serve as a backdrop, as a piece of supporting information, or as the conclusion itself in an argument constructed in a lecture, an article, a book, a documentary, or other form of scholarly output. In scholarship where the music seems secondary to other elements of interest like history or culture, the canon underlying the argument aids knowledgeable readers in assessing the validity of the scholar's assertions because canons signal any number of extramusical ideas that support the discussion at hand. Robert Walser speaks about how the meaning of songs and the experiences of listeners with those songs impacts the success of a piece of writing about music.

> I find some songs powerfully meaningful and others not; so do all of the fans and musicians I know. Some of us are better than others at explaining why we care about this song and not that one, but for most people, music is intimately involved with crucial feelings of identity and notions of community. This is where sociological approaches to the study of popular music have so often failed. For while I do not suggest that either technical training or performing experience are necessary prerequisites for insightful writing about popular music, one must be able to experience—not just discern—

> differences among musical texts in order to avoid imposing an interpretation of monotony and singularity of meaning that fans and musicians do not recognize.[11]

The primary benefit of understanding a canon of music that informs scholarship is that it allows readers to assess a scholarly argument based not solely on abstract, logical principles but embodied experiences with the music and its culture. Aside from any logical conclusion that can be derived from using a canon to support an argument, canons help win arguments because they can rally sympathetic readers who appreciate the canon because of their feelings about the music.

While some scholarly arguments lead to heated debates or hostile situations, the ability of canons to elicit positive emotional responses affords scholars opportunities to construct arguments that are non-confrontational because the conclusion is not particularly controversial. Arguments can be constructed to create knowledge about a community while treating the community as a collaborator in knowledge production and promoting the community in a way that minimizes harm and maximizes benefit. Further, arguments can be an extension of the pleasure experienced by engaging with heavy metal music; Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach argue that the experienced pleasures of "hanging out and talking metal" are a central part of the social dynamics of the global metal scene.[12] I view metal scholarship as an extension of this practice.

Ultimately, winning an academic argument is not a nefarious act. But it does require taking a position on a topic, and it is a means for gaining cultural capital in the scholarly community because a well-executed argument can result in a positively received paper or an accepted publication. Understanding the canon that underlies a scholarly argument is an important part of assessing the scholarship.

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[11] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxii–xxiii.
[12] Esther Clinton and Jeremy Wallach, "Talking Metal: The Social Phenomenology of Hanging Out," in *Heavy Metal Music and the Communal Experience*, ed. Nelson Varas-Díaz (New York: Lexington Books, 2016), 38.

So What Is a Canon?

Though the word "canon" carries numerous associations that may elicit strong reactions, I wish to temporarily unburden the term in order to focus not on the value of canons themselves but on the processes that create them and the intentions of their creators. Canons are imaginary structures built from instances of canonization and are understood through exposure to these instances of canonization, rather than to a canon as a whole. Despite the musical makeup of the canons on which I focus in my dissertation, these canons cannot be unlinked from the values of the authors that create them and the communities that support them. Canons are inseparable from the thoughts, lifeways, and other elements of culture that fall within the boundaries of the (Bourdieuan) field in question.[13] This boundedness of canons allows them to be studied within the context of a particular field or community without needing to address all known discourses surrounding a community or type of music; canons are by their nature exclusive and exclusionary because they do not include everything. This boundedness does not eliminate the need to provide contrasting examples of canons or counterdiscourses where it is appropriate in order to illustrate a point or argument. But addressing all available discourses around a category of music is not necessary to understand a canon because the true state of canons is *not* a Platonic whole. I will elaborate on the above points in my methodology section later in this chapter.

Philip Bohlman summarizes the role of canons in musicology by stating that they serve to establish the boundaries of the discipline, and in turn "discipline music," by allowing musicologists to limit conversations on music to those things that circulate in accepted canons.

> The concept of canon as commonly understood in musicology suggests both an object and the act of determining what that object is. Musicology maintains "music" as its object, but the different disciplines of musicology come to understand what music is in

[13] On fields, see for instance Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. and with an introduction by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). I will provide more information on Bourdieu later on in this introduction.

> different ways. Accordingly, the object, "music," cannot be a single phenomenon; it cannot have universally sanctioned meanings. Linking musicologist to music are the many processes of identifying the diverse phenomena that constitute music and establishing the complex relations among its meanings.
>
> The distinction between object and agency is therefore difficult to pin down; the two depend on each other. Out of this dependency grows an intrinsic relation between canons and their ability to generate a discipline. Canon, indeed, seems to possess a certain immanent power—an imperative and a concomitant ability to ascribe law and order to music—that yields discipline, or, better, the discipline. Canon establishes authority, and that authority is understandably attractive to those who would discipline music. . . .
>
> Musicology's canons, it follows, have the potential to maintain the discipline of musicology and require some measure of loyalty from those who advocate them. The fact that musicologists traditionally thought of canon as a body of representative works should not disturb this relation too much, since these works are also the manifestations of political and ideological principles, such as greatness, genius, importance to a social group or class of society, etc. Further anchoring the concept of canon to a body of representative musical works is the notion that it is only by such works that a disciplined scholar is ruled: she aspires to success in *her field* by controlling *her music* more and more. The canon, therefore, governs the behavior of those within a discipline, proffering a measure of authority while acquiring more itself.[14]

While I agree with all of the above, and think Bohlman's words are applicable to much metal scholarship, it should be noted that most people who study metal, or who identify as metal studies scholars, are not musicologists. Still, I would argue that metal studies scholars, due to being fans of metal music, participate in canons and in the canonization process through their engagement with the music and their choosing to focus on certain forms of metal music over others. Fans also participate in the creation of canons; this is established by Walser, who provides as an example one fan who wrote to a metal magazine to "offer his canon of the best metal bands" in response to such magazines' regular canonization of bands through "best of" lists and criticism.[15] Kahn-Harris argues that "knowledge of the historical development of extreme metal canons is extremely important to scene members."[16] Canons may not be the

[14] Philip Bohlman, "Epilogue: Musics and Canons," in *Disciplining Music*, 200–201.
[15] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 5.
[16] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 123.

primary focus of certain metal studies scholarship, but they still form as a result of the scholarly activities and fandom of metal studies scholars. And canons have power in metal studies because they establish what music signifies a meaningful understanding of the values and aesthetic preferences of the metal community regardless of whether music is the central object of study in a piece of metal studies scholarship.

Multiple Canons

In my view, there exist multiple canons within any musically oriented community, and these canons help to determine the boundaries of what belongs within a musical tradition (and by extension *who* belongs within a musical tradition). This understanding of canons allows analysis of canon formation to move from a frame focused on "what's in" and "what's out," or what is central versus at the margins, to one that acknowledges the greater complexity of the ways that various canons coexist, comingle, and clash in any given institution or musical culture. It acknowledges that some canons can dominate others, while at the same time allowing any music that finds its way into authoritative conversations, syllabi, lists, and publications to be considered as part of a canon and the result of a canonization process. My analysis thus asks why a particular canon focuses on a particular selection of music, how this focus allows people influenced by a particular canon to structure their understanding of this music, and how this body of knowledge interacts with others in existence. Further, this understanding of canons and canonization allows us to ask what is at stake when a particular canon ignores certain music, and what that canon would lose or gain through being more broadly inclusive, knowing that there are other canons that exist that can potentially dominate or supplant the exclusionary one.

The existence of multiple canons forces metal studies scholars to ask reflexive questions, or questions that acknowledge the beliefs and practices of scholars as participants in

canonization.[17] Reflexive questions like "what canons do we prefer?" and "how are we representing metal music?" enrich metal scholarship for these reasons:

- They make it more rigorous through making explicit the biases of the researcher.
- They make it more varied and interesting by allowing work to speak to broader audiences through the inclusion of more canons and the people who participate in them.
- They do the above while providing the balancing standard of requiring the work to make sense to member of the metal community outside the academy who have the power to canonize.[18] Reflexive work avoids the creation of academic utopias where intellectual taste can lead to insular understandings of music that hold little value to the broader musical community.

To acknowledge multiple canons is to acknowledge the vastness of metal music (and music in general). From this acknowledgement comes the recognition that something that calls itself metal studies should not limit itself to a small portion of metal music simply because it is professionally convenient. At the same time, the acknowledgement of multiple canons does not permit metal scholars to argue that metal music is everywhere and is for everyone—metal studies should not attempt to make metal music a "universal language" because this does not bear out against historical fact and the documented experiences of members of various metal scenes. If the arguments of metal studies cannot accommodate all of metal music while at the same time remaining truthful to the widely held understandings of metal music across metal's numerous communities, metal studies needs better arguments to avoid being supplanted by those canonizers who can better accommodate the needs of audiences that seek metal knowledge.

[17] I draw especially here on Loïc J. D. Wacquant, "Toward a Social Praxeology: The Structure and Logic of Bourdieu's Sociology," in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 36, where he defines Bourdieu's take on reflexivity as "the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an integral component and necessary condition of a critical theory of society." For an ethnomusicological perspective, see, for instance, Kay Kaufman Shelemay, "The Ethnomusicologist, Ethnographic Method, and the Transmission of Tradition," in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, ed. Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 141–56.
[18] Examples of those with the power to canonize include journalists, bloggers, YouTubers, social media influencers, documentarians, and music educators. I will elaborate on why this is so in my methodology section below.

Metal Studies: A Brief Overview

Metal studies, known more formally as "metal music studies" due to the codifying force of the International Society for Metal Music Studies,[19] is an academic discipline that most scholars agree began in the late 1980s in response to moral panics of the 1980s surrounding music (metal and otherwise) perceived as having a corrupting influence on children.[20] The two main metal studies works that emerged at this time, the ones that are referenced with great frequency and from which most other work in metal studies emerged, are Deena Weinstein's *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* and Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*.[21] Though they are decidedly different works—Walser spends time criticizing Weinstein for having "all of the virtues and faults of most strictly sociological studies of popular culture" and for ignoring musical analysis in favor of analyzing lyrics, to provide a quick illustration—they nevertheless set the tone for metal studies as a defender of the music against various cultural forces that wished to diminish or destroy metal.[22] With the founding of the International Society for Metal Music Studies in in the 2010s, metal studies has grown into a substantial academic discipline with the journal *Metal Music Studies*, full metal studies conferences, edited collections like *Global Metal Music and Culture: Current Directions in Metal Studies*, and other markers of disciplinary identity.[23]

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[19] See the International Society for Metal Music Studies website, https://metalstudies.org/.
[20] For a solid introductory history of Metal Music Studies, see Brown, "Heavy Genealogy," 213–242. For more on moral panics and metal, see Andy R. Brown, "Suicide Solutions?: Or, How the Emo Class of 2008 Were Able to Contest Their Media Demonization, Whereas the Headbangers, Burnouts, or 'Children of Zoso' Generation Were Not," in *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures*, ed. Titus Hjelm, Keith Kahn-Harris, and Mark Levine (Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2013), 17–35.
[21] Deena Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), later republished as *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Walser, *Running with the Devil*. The first edition of Walser was printed in 1993.
[22] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 23. I delve more into these works and their differences later in this chapter and in Chapter 2 on the early metal studies canon.
[23] Andy R. Brown, Karl Spracklen, Keith Kahn-Harris, and Niall W.R. Scott, eds., *Global Metal Music and Culture: Current Directions in Metal Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

The central argument of metal studies, an academic discipline rooted in a fan-based culture, is decidedly unacademic: metal is not bad. For some non-fans, metal is seen as lacking intellectual substance or musical quality.[24] For others, it is a moral evil that will corrupt children, spur violence, or lead to demonic worship; to quote former United States Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina, "it is outrageous filth, and we have got to do something about it."[25] Metal studies takes as its fundamental position a need to prove the worth of metal music, and by extension metal-oriented people and/or metal music studies, due to this sense that metal music is under threat from cultural forces that wish for it to be diminished or destroyed.[26]

A secondary argument of metal studies, at least since the start of the twenty-first century, is that extreme metal is the most important form of metal music. Extreme metal, a loosely cohesive term for a collection of politically and musically disparate subgenres unified by the fact that they tend to be disliked by the public at large for their challenging subject matter (violent or Satanic or anti-capitalist), screamed (rather than sung) vocals, and predominantly (though not exclusively) complex and a-melodic music, is the most prominent style of music written about in metal music studies despite its relative obscurity in mainstream cultures across the globe. Andy R. Brown shows through quantitative research that metal studies increasingly used terms related to extreme metal in the titles of publications beginning in the late-1990s.[27] Prominent metal studies scholar Jeremy Wallach, in a private e-mail correspondence from 2016, remarked on the

[24] For one example in which punk fans find metal lacking, see Steve Waksman, "Introduction: The Metal/Punk Continuum," in *This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1–18.
[25] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 6:09–6:15. I should note that his statement referred to more music than just metal (it included Prince for instance), though metal was a significant portion of the music he was speaking about.
[26] Rosemary Lucy Hill notes how metal scholars often take defensive positions toward the music they love, and that this position can blind metal studies scholars to problems in the metal community. See Hill, "When Love and Critique Collide: Metal Ontology, Fandom, and Standpoint in Metal Research," *Metal Music Studies* 7 (January 2021): 198.
[27] Brown, "Heavy Genealogy," 221.

dominance of extreme metal in metal studies, saying "what does seem 'canonical' in current [metal studies] is extreme metal." He continued,

> there are a number of unfashionable, not-particularly-transgressive metal subgenres that non-American metalheads like that metalhead scholars avoid almost completely and get derided when they do discuss them: power metal, symphonic metal, classic metal . . . and pop metal.[28]

Though I am open to arguments that this direction may have shifted post-2016, the dominance of extreme metal can be seen forming in the first canon I analyze from the 1990s, and is undoubtable in the second and third canons that began in the 2000s and exist at present.

Extreme metal's dominance in metal studies presents two problems. The first is that extreme metal has not always, if ever, been the most culturally dominant form of metal music in the broader metal community. Extreme metal's non-dominance can be debated based on what you consider to be within the boundaries of extreme metal; for example, thrash metal by bands like Metallica and Megadeth found significant commercial success and is debatably extreme. Even with the grey area of thrash, the cultural significance of non-extreme metal can easily be determined by comparing basically any extreme metal band's record sales, online streams, and other objective measures of popularity to those of bands like Van Halen, Black Sabbath, Kiss, and other successful non-extreme bands. With notable exceptions like thrash mentioned above, non-extreme metal tends to be objectively more popular and prevalent.

The second problem is that advocates of extreme metal tend to question or reject the "metalness" of other forms of metal in an effort to preserve a vision of metal music that aligns with the moral and aesthetic goals of extreme metal. Erik T. Smialek uses the term "abject" to describe subgenres that lack respectability in the extreme metal community, such as hair metal,

[28] E-mail from Jeremy Wallach to the author, November 23, 2016. Used with permission. For more information on metal subgenres listed throughout this dissertation, see the Appendix.

nü metal, and metalcore.[29] Smialek argues that the extreme metal community defines itself in opposition to such abject subgenres, and posits that abject subgenres are outside the boundaries of extreme metal because of their associations with blackness, femininity, and adolescence.[30] The extreme metal community's exclusionary behavior is meaningful for my arguments about canon construction because, for metal fans, it means something to be metal. As mentioned in my Introduction, Robert Walser says

> "heavy metal" is a term that is constantly debated and contested, primarily among fans but also in dialogue with musicians, commercial marketing strategists, and outside critics and censors. Debates over which bands, songs, sounds, and sights get to count as heavy metal provide occasions for contesting musical and social prestige. "That's not heavy metal" is the most damning music criticism a fan can inflict, for that genre name has great prestige among fans.[31]

Extreme metal's erasure of other subgenres' metal status denies prestige to other genres and further cements its centrality. Thus, a large part of this dissertation will be spent investigating the dominance of extreme metal canonization, especially in the latter two metal studies canons I consider. When appropriate, I provide counterarguments against this dominance to create opportunities to speak about other subgenres of metal music and to decenter extreme metal.

I wish it to be abundantly clear that the above paragraphs summarizing the central arguments of metal studies do not reflect the intentions or goals of individual scholars when they create pieces of metal studies scholarship. Metal studies is far more complex than every publication saying "metal is not bad and extreme metal is good." Walser's work is heavily critical of patriarchal misogyny in metal culture.

> Heavy metal musicians and fans have developed tactics for modeling male power and control within the context of a patriarchal culture, and metal's enactions of masculinity

[29] Eric T. Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music, ca. 1990–2015" (PhD diss., McGill University, 2015).
[30] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," especially Chapter 2, "Extreme Metal and Its Others: Metal Audiences' Hostility Towards Adolescence," 65–114.
[31] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 4.

> include varieties of misogyny as well as "exscription" of the feminine—that is, total denial of gender anxieties through the articulation of fantastic worlds without women—supported by male, sometimes homoerotic, bonding.[32]

Keith Kahn-Harris problematizes transgression, a driving force in the creation of subcultural capital in the extreme metal scene.

> Transgression within the scene is founded on a preoccupation with control of the "abject" that associates the abject with female sexuality, homosexuality, and blackness. This fear of the abject is at times translated into texts, discourses, and practices that openly embrace the most virulent kinds of racism, sexism, and homophobia—forms of oppression that are, to a debatable extent, produced by entrenched, large-scale power structures. From this perspective, much of extreme metal merely looks like a self-consciously shocking dramatization of deeply ingrained forms of power.[33]

Walser, Kahn-Harris, and a number of other scholars I will detail further in my "The Breadth of Metal Studies and Future Research Directions" section later in this chapter are actively critical of the portions of metal music and culture that are morally objectionable. Despite the breadth of topics and awareness of the downsides of metal culture, metal studies perpetuates the aforementioned primary and secondary arguments because they have become central to the operation of the field. My claims should not erase the nuance of each individual work, nor should they be taken as an understanding of each scholar's intention in creating scholarship. My argument is a structural argument, and one meant to provide my understanding of how the academic subdiscipline of metal studies operates.

Metal Studies: Defense and Critique

When I describe Weinstein and Walser as defenders of metal music against its detractors, I am not being rhetorically colorful. This is what they were doing, and this is how they are viewed. Karl Spraklen and Niall Scott, in the introductory editorial to the first issue of the journal

[32] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 110.
[33] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 161.

Metal Music Studies, note that Deena Weinstein "has defended heavy metal culture and heavy metal studies for many years, and is still actively involved with both."[34] In his foreword to the 2014 reprinting of *Running with the Devil*, Harris M. Berger says

> *Running with the Devil* was more than just an illustration of a method or an abstract work of theory; it was also a form of cultural intervention. Seeking to articulate the alienation and rage of metalheads living in the deindustrialized America of the early 1990s, Walser's work engaged directly in the heated culture wars of its day. With deep research and cogent analysis, Walser debunked the worst distortions of the Parents Music Research Council [sic] and their allies, those who sought to make heavy metal the scapegoat for America's ills. Metal is not an expression of adolescent rebellion, satanic depravity, or unrestrained hedonism, Walser argued; to the contrary the horror and madness that metal depicts is the true face of late capitalism.[35]

This spirit and mission continue in the second and third canons I study, with varying degrees of broader cultural relevance depending on the music or scholarly work in question. In a positive example of such a defense, scholar Nelson Varas-Días's documentary *Acts of Resistance: Heavy Metal Music in Latin America* highlights how Latin American heavy metal creates spaces of resistance and anti-colonial activism in the face of issues ranging from poverty to environmental exploitation.[36] On the less positive side, academic work that defends metal becomes problematic when metal music, musicians, and fans are the ones causing harm, either in terms of aesthetic or demographic exclusion (like with extreme metal and its abject subgenres). Though it is common to do so, taking the ambiguous stance of "love the music, hate the artist and their politics and values" toward extreme metal music does little to decenter the bands and subgenres that exclude the abject, especially when the music in question was made and experienced by people living and

[34] Karl Spracklen and Niall Scott, "Editorial," *Metal Music Studies* 1 (2014): 3–4.
[35] Harris M. Berger, "Foreword to the 2014 Edition," in Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xii. To explain the "sic," "PMRC" is most commonly the "Parents Music Resource Center," though I have seen some variation from this in other published documents.
[36] Nelson Varas-Díaz, "Acts of Resistance: Heavy Metal Music in Latin America—Full Documentary," YouTube video, uploaded by Nelson Varas Diaz, December 9, 2020, 1:08:36, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gm0oozTOEbE.

breathing today.[37] Thus much criticism of metal music and culture walks a curious path between apologist and condemning based on the perceived need to protect metal while displaying values supported by the majority of the members of the metal studies community.

Scholarship in metal music studies is, more often than not, critical of those segments of metal culture whose behavior does not match the pluralist and inclusive ideals championed throughout the humanities. This criticism is offered in the interest of improving the metal community. The International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS) has a statement on their website that addresses the need to challenge discrimination in the metal community.

> Racism and intersecting forms of discrimination (e.g. sexism, homophobia, ableism) are major social problems that are also present in heavy metal culture. The widespread narrative of an apolitical metal scene, inclusive to all, is a misconception which contributes to discriminatory ideas regarding race, gender, sexual orientation, social background, disability and age. To remain silent in the face of structural racism and other bigotries is not an apolitical or neutral stance, but a form of complicity. One needs to be aware of these discriminatory structures in order to create fundamental changes. It requires a willingness for self-reflection as well as the willingness to critically examine the culture of heavy metal itself.
>
> Many members of ISMMS highly value the culture of heavy metal, which makes it all the more important not to excuse or trivialize existing racism, sexual harassment or social exclusion. The key to a fundamental change lies with each individual as well as in academic institutions.[38]

[37] While this stance is often tacet, Keith Kahn-Harris makes it explicit in *Extreme Metal* when he says "this simultaneous fascination and bewilderment has never left me. Extreme metal's sheer difficulty as a musical form, its aestheticization of sounds that many people find repellent, has always entranced me. At the same time, its problematic politics, its occasional misogyny and in particular the fascism of some black metallers has always worried me. . . . I have always been an ambivalent fan of extreme metal." *Extreme Metal*, 5.

[38] "Full Statement of Antidiscrimination," International Society for Metal Music Studies Website, accessed 7/21/2021, https://metalstudies.org/statement/. As this link was found to be dead on 1/16/2023, part of this statement can be seen at "About," International Society for Metal Music Studies Website, accessed 1/16/2023, https://metalstudies.org/about/. Keith Kahn-Harris acknowledges the "widespread narrative of an apolitical metal scene, inclusive to all," and theorizes this knowing apoliticalness in the metal community as reflexive anti-reflexivity in his chapter "Reflexivity, Music, and Politics," in *Extreme Metal*, 151–56.

Even though certain very significant bands and members of the metal community are blatantly racist and sexist, metal studies makes a point to challenge this norm as the defender of the culture in educated society (and sometimes beyond it).[39]

While I applaud this stance from a personal moral standpoint—we should fight forms of discrimination like racism, sexism, and homophobia—one of my biggest criticisms of metal studies is that I want metal studies to argue that metal, rather than being "not bad," is good.[40] More precisely, I want metal studies to shift the overwhelming amount of energy it spends studying and critiquing the extreme subgenres of metal that house the misogynist, violence-obsessed neo-Nazis in favor of talking about other forms of metal music that more closely align with the values taught in the vast majority of academic classrooms: integrity, inclusiveness, open-mindedness, and other things understood to be morally good amongst inquisitive minds.[41] The transition from the double-negative "not bad" to "good" is significant; it is the turn from defensive to confident, and the transition into a field that chooses to focus on art that models how we want the world to be. To me, this seems preferable to maintaining a metal studies canon in which the music studied is largely morally problematic but musically compelling. This ambiguous stance is a tired manner of generating academic interest akin to the ways in which Wagner is discussed in undergraduate classrooms.

[39]For an example of racism there is Phil Anselmo, the former lead singer of Pantera, shouting "white power" and throwing a Nazi salute; see Kory Grow, "Phil Anselmo Opens Up about Racism, Pantera's Legacy, Childhood Abuse," *Rolling Stone*, December 22, 2016, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/phil-anselmo-opens-up-about-racism-panteras-legacy-childhood-abuse-2-190726/. For sexism, see Kim Kelly "Of Course Crybaby Black Metal Fans Are Sending Death Threats to Myrkur," *Vice*, January 7, 2016, https://www.vice.com/en/article/6vgqe8/myrkur-facebook-threats.

[40] My use of vague and explicitly value-laden words like "good" and "bad" is intentional. It reflects the origins of the foundational arguments of metal studies in broader cultural discussions during the 1980s over whether metal and other pop music of the time were morally corrupt (as Berger mentions in his foreword to Walser, *Running with the Devil*, quoted above).

[41] I have amalgamated numerous flaws into the neo-Nazi mentioned in this sentence. I hope the reader can forgive my lack of specificity.

At the same time, the desire to move away from a defense of metal music that is constantly admitting its faults should not be accompanied by a shift into the creation of utopian academic canons that are based in theory and not in reality. I admit that this is a challenge for myself at times; I would very much like to build a canon that suits my epistemological, moral, and aesthetic preferences. However, something so idiomatic runs the risk of being met with contestations of "that's not how metal works," which in turn would have my canon rejected by the broader metal community in favor of one that reflects the metal community's view of reality. While it is possible to invent an untrue body of knowledge accepted by a large enough community for it to hold power in discourse—if current American politics is any indication—doing so knowingly is academically unethical, plain and simple. Ideally, a standard would be adopted that presents truths about metal music, looks for opportunities to teach about the problems with these truths, and highlights the good parts of metal music and culture that demonstrate the types of pluralist values espoused in the ISMMS statement shown above. This standard would allow for the creation of new canons that meet academic standards for the presentation of truths while resisting the temptation to maintain current canons that are morally questionable for the sake of professional convenience.

This shift to canonizing metal that is good is not a call to ignore or resist scholarship that points out flaws in metal music culture in an effort toward betterment. Rosemary Lucy Hill argues that, with regard to the misogyny and representations of sexual violence in metal culture,

> it is much better for us—our mental health—to examine positive representations, like queer songs and feminist responses. But looking into the evil heart of the music we love is important work.[42]

[42] Hill, "When Love and Critique Collide," 199.

Since a primary goal of my dissertation is to critique metal studies in an effort to highlight problems and find solutions, my goal here is the same as Hill's. Metal studies must canonize music and culture that models the values espoused by the ISMMS while decentering or rejecting those bands and fans that do not. To canonize a good band we must choose a band whose place in history is not trivial, while at the same time challenging the disciplinary tradition of what is canonizable. This work is not without consequence; to challenge the thoughts and tastes of important senior members of a scholarly field potentially limits chances at acceptance, publication, and promotion in that field. Or, as Hill asks, "How many of us are going beyond our position as insiders towards being reflexive and critical? In fact, might we even perceive a risk in doing so?"[43] Canonizing metal that is good is not simply presenting that which we find aesthetically and morally pleasing for acceptance. It is constructing sound arguments for the place in the canon of bands and fans whose behavior resists that which is at the evil heart of the music we love.

Methodology

Sociology

The main line of my methodology stems not from musicology but sociology. I am on some level joining a discussion that begins with Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural capital and the work of scholars who participated in the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, most notably Dick Hebdige and his book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*.[44] The ways in which flows of non-monetary capital circulate in subcultures was theorized as subcultural

[43] Hill, "When Love and Critique Collide," 200.
[44] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

capital by Sarah Thornton in *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital*.[45] This theory was further refined for metal studies by Keith Kahn-Harris in *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* with his concepts of mundane subcultural capital and transgressive subcultural capital. Briefly, mundane subcultural capital comes from successfully abiding by norms of behavior and artistic production in the metal scene, and transgressive subcultural capital comes from breaking with tradition in a manner which is intentionally shocking.[46]

I enter this lineage at the juncture where subculture meets the scholarly, where scholars are what academics like Henry Jenkins call aca-fans.[47] I draw on numerous other works that enrich my ability to speak about the curious canon of metal studies: Bourdieu's work on reflexivity in the academy, John Guillory's on cultural capital in the academic formation of the literary canon, and Michèle Lamont's on academic deliberation on panels that award fellowships and research grants.[48] While I will delve into relevant details below, this lineage is worth outlining clearly here because it provides the basis for me to consider the limits of academically formed canons of metal music. Explanations of what metal is in academia must be situated in an understanding of how academics form canons and how academics capitalize on their work within the academy.

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu theorizes that knowledge of elite culture stemming from education or upbringing—taste—provides a non-

[45] Sarah Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996).
[46] Kahn-Harris, "Extreme Metal and Subcultural Capital," in *Extreme Metal*, 121–39.
[47] The most famous scholarship that discusses aca-fans is Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2013), though in the introduction to the revised version Jenkins mentions he did not use the term in the book.
[48] Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984); Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*; Guillory, *Cultural Capital*; Michèle Lamont, *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

monetary capital he dubs "cultural capital" that benefits those with such knowledge.[49] Like John Guillory, whom I will discuss later in my methodology, I am less interested in following the theory of Bourdieu strictly than in expanding on the theory of cultural (and subcultural) capital by considering how it flows in metal academic canons.[50] To limit my Bordieuanism to one concentrated space, I will use the term cultural capital throughout this document, unless otherwise noted, to mean the cultural and/or subcultural capital that circulates in this particular metal studies field; with this in mind I wish to study how the habitus of the academy shapes canonization in this field.[51] It is not my intention to argue for the centrality or peripherality of metal studies as it pertains to the cultural mainstream, if such a thing can be said to exist anymore; metal is too broad, and has too many layers of popularity and cultural exposure, for me to execute such an argument with the rigor it deserves. Rather than focus on details of cultural, subcultural, and then sub-subcultural capital in the context of subcultures within metal, I will consider all to be "cultural capital." I will understand the value of a particular form of cultural capital to be relative to the culture(s) in which it circulates, though it will have overlap with other cultures that value this particular body of knowledge. Cultural relativism, the idea that a culture's morality and practices are best understood in the context of the culture that created them, serves as the foundation for my aforementioned "cultural capital relativism."[52] My hope is that this

[49] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).
[50] Guillory says in his preface, "The purpose of importing the term [cultural capital] into the debate about the canon is not to endorse Bourdieu's project in its totality . . . but to introduce an entirely different theoretical perspective into the debate." *Cultural Capital*, viii.
[51] My ability to construct such a sentence stems not only from Bourdieu's *Distinction* but also from his *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977) and *The Field of Cultural Production*.
[52] My understanding of relativism, cultural and otherwise, is shaped in large part by Clifford Geertz, "Distinguished Lecture: Anti-Anti Relativism," *American Anthropologist* 86 (1984): 263–78; Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" in *Relativism: A Contemporary Anthology*, ed. Michael Krausz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 393–408; and Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Relativism and Cross-Cultural Understanding," in *Relativism: A Contemporary Anthology*, 488–500.

simplification of the term "cultural capital" in practice will yield clearer writing while maintaining richness of thought.

My argument for the centrality of academic argument in metal studies, and canons being tools for winning academic arguments, stems in large part from reading Randall Collins. In *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*, Collins argues that

> intellectual conflict is always limited by focus on certain topics, and by the search for allies. Not warring individuals but a small number of warring camps is the pattern of intellectual history. Conflict is the energy source of intellectual life, and conflict is limited by itself.[53]

For a long portion of my dissertation process, I was seeking to understand why extreme metal dominated academic conversations by looking at extreme metal fandom and how it infiltrated academia. To borrow from Zen teaching, this was akin to concentrating on the finger pointing at the moon. Refocusing on the academic side of metal studies quickly made me realize that extreme metal, while likely very popular among metal scholars, is important primarily because it is one of the best tools for limiting focus and finding allies; not only is it aesthetically and morally polarizing, but it has been effectively theorized in the second and third canons I analyze as a site of musical achievement and as a global phenomenon with local interest respectively. At present, extreme metal is a site that generates (academic) controversy where metal more broadly may not. While in the earliest stages of metal studies the lighter forms of metal music garnered the attention of the United State Senate for being morally unacceptable, they now are played at sporting events, weddings, and political rallies and have lost much of their polarizing force.[54] Extreme metal has, with limited exceptions, not entered into such spaces. Last, extreme metal is

[53] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*.
[54] Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" is perhaps the best example of this phenomenon of pariah to popular. Considering how reviled it was by conservatives when it was released in the 1980s, it is ironic that Twisted Sister had to ask Donald Trump not to use the song in his 2016 presidential campaign. See Joe Divita, "How Twisted Sister Dodged Publicly Shaming Donald Trump into Ceasing Use of 'We're Not Gonna Take It," *Loudwire*, January 18, 2017, https://loudwire.com/twisted-sister-dodged-publicly-shaming-donald-trump-were-not-gonna-take-it/.

unquestionably metal, whereas the lighter metal music may not be. Bands that were once metal can lose their metal status as more extreme forms of metal emerge. In Robert Walser's *Running With the Devil*, which is named after the Van Halen song "Running With the Devil," Walser dedicates space during his argument that the definition of metal is under constant contestation to show how fans debate whether Van Halen is metal; this is prime evidence of this phenomenon.[55] Extreme metal lends itself to scholarly production because of how it limits the conversations surrounding metal and creates allies in those who wish to defend it. Canonizing extreme metal in metal studies allows those with knowledge of extreme metal to benefit from the cultural capital that comes with this knowledge.

Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus,* a reflexive sociological study of the French academy using the methodologies developed in works like *Distinction* and *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* contributes to my dissertation in two ways. The first is the emphasis on the difficulties and benefits of taking a reflexive position in academic work.

> In choosing to study the social world in which we are *involved*, we are obliged to confront, in *dramatized* form as it were, a certain number of fundamental epistemological problems, all related to the question of the difference between practical knowledge and scholarly knowledge, and particularly to the special difficulties involved first in *breaking* with inside experience and then in reconstituting the knowledge which has been obtained by means of this break. We are aware of the obstacles to scientific knowledge constituted as much by excessive proximity as by excessive remoteness, and we know how difficult it is to sustain that relation of a proximity broken and restored, which requires much hard work, not only on the object of our research, but also on ourselves as researchers, if we are to reconcile everything we can know only as insiders, and everything we cannot or do not wish to know as long as we do remain insiders.[56]

Here Bourdieu points out the difficulties in separating those things we know as the result of assumption, disciplinary tradition and bias, or other forms of received knowledge from the things we learn from scientific inquiry. My own intellectual background will not allow me to form such

[55] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 5–6.
[56] Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, 1. Emphasis in the text.

a clean, hierarchical delineation between these two types of knowledge.[57] However, I acknowledge the difficult line between furthering work in an academic tradition in an uncritical manner because it is a shortcut to additional cultural capital, and critical approaches to the work that we produce that render more accurate information though they may be unpopular and risk not accruing cultural capital. Bourdieu defends himself by saying "I have made no concessions in writing this book, but I trust that it bears no malice, for it comprises, as the reader will have guessed, a considerable proportion of self-analysis by proxy."[58] By including himself as part of the analyzed academics in his book, Bourdieu hopes to disarm those readers who may be resistant to his critique of their work.

The second thing I take from *Homo Academicus* is that doing reflexive work that targets one's own intellectual community violates one of the fundamental operating procedures of intellectual communities: the well-limited intellectual conflicts theorized by Collins. Bourdieu points out this problem, saying

> as we can see in polemical exchanges, which are the high spots of a constant process of symbolic competition, practical knowledge of the social world, and especially of adversaries, obeys a *reductionist* tendency; it resorts to classificatory epithets which designate or identify groups, and groups of properties, in an eclectic perspective, and do not admit awareness of the principles on which they are based.[59]

If by staying inside the rules of the game academics can participate in the central arguments that garner the most cultural capital, stepping back to analyze the rules themselves not only potentially limits one's access to capital but risks insulting those with power in the field in question because it may undermine the intellectual foundations on which they have built their

[57] For Bourdieu, of the two types, science is good and other knowledge is bad. In the "Preface to the English Edition" of *Homo Academicus*, xiii, Bourdieu does not embrace "so called 'postmodern' analyses, which do not more than add the flavour of the month dressed with a soupçon of 'French radical chic' to the age-old irrationalist rejection of science." I embrace a pragmatic approach to knowledge similar to Richard Rorty's in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
[58] Boudieu, *Homo Academicus*, xxvi.
[59] Boudieu, *Homo Academicus*, 14.

reputation. In line with Bourdieu, I hope that any transgressions I commit can be forgiven in the interest of improving the study of metal music as a whole, my work included.

Collins offers a reflexive analysis of the career of a hypothetical intellectual that further illustrates the flows of cultural capital in intellectual conversation by highlighting how participating within the traditional arguments benefits the collection of capital. Using the concept of an "interaction ritual," or an IR, an event in which two or more people share reflexive awareness and a common mood or emotion, Collins creates a theory of cultural capital in the academy that focuses on central arguments and symbolic knowledge that circulate in conversations and texts during a period of time.[60]

> Consider now the trajectory of an individual's career across the intellectual milieu as an IR chain. The intellectual world is a massive conversation, circulating cultural capital in intermittent face-to-face rituals as well as in writing. What makes one an intellectual is one's attraction to this conversation: to participate in the talk of its "hot center," where the ideas have the greatest sacredness, and if possible to attach one's own identity to such ideas so that one's ideas are circulated widely through the conversation, and one's personal reputation with it. The conversation of intellectuals is competitive, an implicit shouldering aside and grasping of one another to get as much into the focus of attention as possible.[61]

Collins describes the academic field in which cultural capital circulates as one in which vibrant conversations attract participants seeking to make successful arguments in order to bolster their reputation.

> What makes some cultural capital worth more than others? At a minimal level, knowledge of the basic vocabulary of the field, of its concepts, its past successes, its best-known sacred objects. But this only brings one entry into the field. To reach a more eminent position, one must be aware of the center of current discussion, and of the symbolic ingredients that can get one the floor. In the modern sociology of science this is called the research front, but this term is a little too specific to a particular kind of innovation-oriented intellectual field. In many historical periods, the intellectual community is in a scholasticizing mode, worshipping exalted texts from the past which are regarded as containing the completion of all wisdom.[62]

[60] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, 22.
[61] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, 30–31.
[62] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, 31.

The "hot centers" in the three metal studies canons I examine are focused not on music *per se* but on how that music operates in cultural contexts. As the central argument of metal studies is "metal is not bad," metal intellectuals stand to gain cultural capital from defending the musics and people that are the hardest to defend. Extreme metal thus becomes a strong choice of subject matter for those seeking eminence in the metal studies field. Again, the purpose of canonization is to win arguments. If what matters in an argument can be controlled, it makes argument easier. If metal music must be bad in order that it can be defended, why not take the most obviously bad metal as the starting point for a rigorous defense?

Yet if metal studies must continue to argue that metal is not bad, why not argue that the metal that is ignored or rejected is "not bad"? Rephrased, why not defend nü metal because of its "abject" status?[63] Further, if metal studies can begin to argue that metal is good, what opportunities would this open? Metal studies should shift arguments from those that bring cultural capital based on the current climate of metal studies to those that would do so if metal studies correlated its aesthetics with its morals. However, as stated above, the risks in promoting this kind of work include unemployability.

An important juncture in my sociological methodology is where canonization interacts with the flows of cultural capital in the academy. In *Cultural Capital*, a work of tremendous erudition that resists succinct summation, John Guillory argues that the literary canon debates in the academy in the 1990s were not truly about representation in the political or governmental sense (who gets to participate and who holds power in culture broadly) but about the regulation

[63] The best work I have encountered on this was a paper defending hair metal brought to my attention by Jeremy Wallach: John McCombe, "Hair Metal and Authenticity in the Twenty-First Century Heavy Metal Canon Wars," presented at the conference "Modern Heavy Metal: Markets, Practices, and Cultures," Helsinki, Finland, June 2015. While there are surely other instances, they are somewhat rare.

of cultural capital within the academy (what counts as worthy of academic interest).[64] Within this argument, Guillory points out that the canon is "an *imaginary* totality of works" that is understood through exposure to lists in syllabi, and that we never actually know or study the canon in its totality.[65] Most importantly, Guillory says that acts of defiance against the canon such as including "non-canonic" works on a syllabus do not overthrow the canon "because every construction of a syllabus *institutes* once again the process of canon formation."[66] By teaching works outside of the traditional, western-white-male-centric canon, academics were reshaping the academy, but were neither increasing the power of the groups of people whose works were represented by the inclusion of "non-canonical" authors nor increasing the relevance of academic work more broadly in a world where those in power tended to possess not literary capital but capital related to reaping monetary capital in the business world.[67]

Important for my work are the concepts that the canon is imaginary and that acts of canonization in the form of lists, syllabi, and other selections of music are what construct the canon. Incorporating Guillory's theory into my broad interpretation of cultural capital, I would consider canons to exist where groups of people have shared understandings of what works count as valuable to know, and assert that canons are constructed by sharing such knowledge through verbal or written means. Metal scholars have imagined canons through exposure to lists of works deemed to be culturally significant within metal studies, and continue to construct and reconstruct these canons through acts of canonization in the form of publications, conferences, syllabi, conversations, social media posts, and other manners of documenting which works matter in an effort to regulate flows of cultural capital around metal music. While phrasing

[64] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*.
[65] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 30 for instance.
[66] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 31.
[67] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 45.

canonization as regulation makes this seem like a negative process, I include in this regulation the need to construct canons in order to define boundaries of community and taste in the pursuit of pleasure through sharing interests with likeminded people.[68] What is important is not that canons are formed, but that there are actions that form and reform them, and that they can be reformed through the creation of new lists. If we do not like our canon, we can work to reform it through participating in acts of canonization.

Also important for my work, and meriting further explanation on my part, is Guillory's argument that the canonization of works viewed as "outside" the canon has an impact primarily on cultural capital within the elite circles of the academy rather than on the material wellbeing of those on the margins of culture broadly (as compared to, for instance, political policy change). While I strongly agree with Guillory that acts of canonization have dramatic impacts in the field in which they exist (such as the musical canon in musical studies), I do not wish to suggest that this argument's relevance to the metal canons I study means that all acts of canonization are powerless to impact the lives of people from historically marginalized situations. Canons, especially those that exclude a group or groups of people who largely lack the ability to represent themselves in the canon, possess a representative power that can lend support to the perpetuation of dominant ideologies that enable material forms of domination. As Edward Said says in *Orientalism*,

> the nexus of knowledge and power creating "the Oriental" and in a sense obliterating him as a human being is therefore not for me an exclusively academic matter. Yet it is an intellectual matter of some very obvious importance. I have been able to put to use my humanistic and political concerns for the analysis and description of a very worldly matter, the rise, development, and consolidation of Orientalism. Too often literature and culture are presumed to be politically, even historically innocent; it has regularly seemed otherwise to me, and certainly my study of Orientalism has convinced me (and I hope

[68] See for instance Clinton and Wallach, "Talking Metal," 51, and Dave Hickey, "Buying the World," *Daedalus* 131 (2002): 69–70, on the manner in which groups experience pleasure through participating in likeminded appreciation.

> will convince my literary colleagues) that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together.[69]

There are important distinctions to be made between the act of adding a work to a syllabus at an elite educational institution in an effort to rectify problems that exist in culture on a systemic level, and the problems that can arise from a canon that represents disempowered people in a manner resembling or contributing to systemic inequality. So, when we consider acts of canonization within a field, we must consider whether that canon has the ability to escape the ivory tower and enter popular consciousness before ascribing certain powers to acts of canonization. This should not dishearten us from wishing to change canons through acts of canonization, but rather determine that we must consider the impact of canons within the fields they occur in first and then see whether they expand outward.

Michèle Lamont's *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment* studies academic peer review panels, comparing the standards of excellence of six distinct academic disciplines: history, anthropology, English literature, political science, economics, and philosophy.[70] Lamont demonstrates not only how academics compete to award prestigious awards and grants to applicants across various disciplines but also how academics on these award panels work together to manage the delicate social situations that arise on these panels. This is done to achieve the shared goal of awarding limited resources fairly, despite differing standards of excellence between the various represented academic disciplines.[71] While the specific knowledge that arises from this book influences my perception of academic work in disciplines that participate in metal studies, it is Lamont's manner of building on Bourdieu's work that is most relevant here.

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[69] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 27.
[70] Lamont, *How Professors Think*.
[71] Michèle Lamont, "Opening the Black Box of Peer Review," in *How Professors Think*, 1–21.

> Bourdieu argues that the judgments of scholars reflect and serve their positions in their academic field, even if they naturalize these judgments and legitimize them in universalistic terms. While he examines the social and economic filtering that lie behind interests, he does not consider whether and how defending excellence is central to the self-concept of many academics and how aspects of disinterestedness, such as pleasure, can be more than a self-serving illusion. In contrast, I factor into the analysis academics' sense of self and their emotions. While Bourdieu suggests that in the competition for distinction conflicts are strongest among those occupying similar positions in fields, my interviews suggest that actors are motivated by not only the opportunity to maximize their position, but also their pragmatic involvement in collective problem solving.[72]

It is the understanding that people in an evaluative community are not solely competitive and combative, but cooperative and even caring, that informs my understand of how metal scholars canonize. As mentioned above, metal music fans form canons in part to establish communities of likeminded appreciators; canon formation too can be seen as a collective manner for solving problems through identifying excellence in order to promote music, musicians, and ideas that benefit the group as a whole. Further, this only further emphasizes the role of canonization in rectifying the position of groups that have been historically marginalized; if metal studies has the shared goal of combatting exclusionary mindsets like sexism and racism, then canonization is a tool that can serve in this battle.

I have also drawn on Lamont's *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*, especially its use of the concept of symbolic boundaries.[73] Symbolic boundaries, the understood lines of communal sameness through knowing the differences between insiders and outsiders, is an important theoretical tool for understanding the exclusionary practices of extreme metal canonizers. Lamont shows though comparative analysis of French and American upper-middle-class men from cultural centers and peripheries how these men define themselves and their values and morals largely in opposition to

[72] Lamont, *How Professors Think*, 20.
[73] Michèle Lamont, *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

others who do not hold the same values and morals. I also draw on Anthony Cohen's *Symbolic Construction of Community,* which focuses on the community-building aspects of symbolic boundaries. Cohen says "'Community' thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference. The word thus expresses a *relational* idea: the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities."[74] As mentioned above, the drawing of communal boundaries is not always negative, because it can be a means for the building of solidarity through shared interests. Regardless, awareness of symbolic boundaries enables the identification of sites of canonic contestation and exclusion.

Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style,* as part of the Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS), sought to theorize the ways that subcultures resist mainstream culture through demonstrations of defiance "reflected in the surfaces of subculture—in the styles made up of mundane objects which have double meaning."[75] By studying these outward demonstrations of difference against the dominant class in the English youth fashions of various groups, including punks, skinheads, mods, and rockers, Hebdige shows not only how subcultures draw boundaries of identity against the dominant cultures they resist, but find value in the sense of community that comes from a shared set of values and meanings.[76] While scholars like Sarah Thornton and Keith Kahn-Harris criticize the BCCCS's work for being too broadly theoretical with regard to the homogeneity of subcultures, and specifically Hebdige's for his complete lack of engagement with the subcultures he wrote about, the sense that metal music, culture, and scholarship are reacting to a dominant culture that seeks to marginalize or

[74] Anthony P. Cohen, *Symbolic Construction of Community* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 12.
[75] Hebdige, *Subculture*, 2.
[76] Hebdige, *Subculture*, 2–3.

criminalize it is pervasive in metal studies, whether the dominant culture at the time is an actual or rhetorical force.[77]

Sarah Thornton's *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* builds upon subcultural theory by rejecting on some level the highly theoretical subcultural analysis of Hebdige and the BCCCS in favor of work from the more empirical Chicago School and by borrowing liberally from Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital to coin the term "subcultural capital."[78] Rather than being a pervasive force in a broad culture that grants power to those who know it, like cultural capital in Bourdieu's sense, subcultural capital operates in smaller subcultural spaces that have their own rules outside of the dominant cultural paradigm. In the context of the British club/rave scene, Thornton says that "subcultural capital is objectified in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections. . . . Subcultural capital is embodied in the form of being 'in the know,' using (but not overusing) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles."[79] While I am avoiding the term subcultural capital for reasons of verbal cleanliness, I maintain from Thornton's theory in my use of the term "cultural capital" the sense of culture as best being defined by the commonalities of those with shared interests; Thornton says "subcultural capital confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder."[80] I believe this to be true of all cultural capital, and further relate this need for a relevant beholder to the concept of interpretive communities as defined by Stanley Fish in which a particular instance of cultural output (a text for him) cannot be judged outside the standards of the community to which one belongs and that defines that community's

[77] Thornton, *Club Cultures*, 8–9. Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 16–17.
[78] Thornton, *Club Cultures*, 8–9 for BCCCS and 11 for Bourdieu.
[79] Thornton, *Club Cultures*, 11–12.
[80] Thornton, Club Cultures, 11.

understandings of a text.[81] All cultural capital belongs in particular communities, and cultural capital's meaning is limited to those who have the power to interpret it; "subculture" is only a way of situating the relevance of particular cultural capital in the perceived broader culture.

The two streams of cultural capital and cultural studies, merged by Thornton, enter into metal studies with Keith Kahn-Harris's influential *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*.[82] While I find his theory a compelling manner in which to describe many notable developments in the metal scene, I critique it in Chapter 3 for creating a hierarchy of kinds of cultural capital, with transgressive on top. This hierarchy has contributed significantly to extreme metal's dominance in metal studies because extreme metal has a hip methodological lineage that allows for the music to have both a trajectory of increasing artistic merit in a manner akin to Western art music and the ability to thwart the stodginess and supposed cultural centrality of the concert hall in favor of the dark, dank spaces like metal musicians' practice rooms discussed in Walser's introduction.[83] While transgressive subcultural capital has the power to explain much of metal music production, it has also served to centralize extreme metal music in the academy because "mundane" metal music cannot possibly be as interesting in the context of academic argument.

Musicology

Though my methodological foundation within musicology is a bit less linear than the sociological, it does have two distinct parts worth discussing. The first is the select-but-noteworthy work on metal in musicology that includes works like Walser's *Running with the*

[81] Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).
[82] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*.
[83] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xix–xx.

Devil and Harris Berger's *Metal, Rock, and Jazz: Perception and the Phenomenology of Musical Experience*.[84] Both are notable for their creative and rigorous use of musical analysis to prove points about heavy metal music and culture, and I view their work (as did Walser) as a critical tool against the dominance of sociological work which, frankly, is not always musically expert. While arguing for more critical, musicological scholarship is not the primary purpose of my dissertation, I would love to see more metal musicology that deconstructs the supposed unity of extreme metal by pointing out the significant musical differences between the various subgenres in parallel with their cultural and aesthetic differences. Such work would render the concept of extreme metal less potent, allowing for an opening to other ways of grouping metal music along lines of aesthetic, political, and cultural unity.

My analysis of heavy metal music will rely not only on my music-theoretical training but also on my knowledge of recording and music production stemming from my experience playing in bands, using digital audio workstations, and working in project management at the international music electronics company inMusic. As Albin Zak points out in *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records*, recorded music creates its identity and musical meaning not only through notes and texts, but also through elements such as timbre, texture, echo, reverberation, and the performance itself.[85] Recording technology has developed a great deal since Zak's work. Affordable digital versions of technologies once rare and expensive to produce have created profound shifts in the ways that live performance and recordings are made to sound. Analog instruments can be plugged into computers in ways that make them sound bigger, louder, and more metal. The "percussive and rhythmic" sounds of electric guitars playing power chords

[84] Walser, *Running with the Devil*; Harris M. Berger, *Metal, Rock, and Jazz: Perception and the Phenomenology of Musical Experience* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 2012).
[85] Albin Zak III, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

that Walser writes about can be made to cut out into silence more quickly through pedal-form noise gates—$200 boxes incorporated into guitar signal chains that block signal from passing when it falls below a certain threshold—allowing for even more rhythmically intricate styles of playing because the sound can be stopped even faster than with the traditional damping of the strings. All of these details of sound production and recording factor into the musical meaning of metal, and some of the greatest symbolic boundaries that exist in metal are related to sonic signifiers.

The second musicological stream I draw from is work done to theorize canons from a musicological perspective. Carl Dahlhaus's *Foundations of Music History* provides an influential, Platonic view of the Western music canon.[86] To avoid what he sees as a potential ambiguity with the term "canon," Dahlhaus distinguishes between the "canon chosen" and the "canon chosen from," arguing that preferential choices made about certain composers over others do not alter the larger canon from which these choices are drawn.[87] Yet in doing this he acknowledges the existence of more than one canon.

> Whether or not a piece of music proves to be of historical significance depends in large part, if not exclusively, on the point of view chosen by the historian and on the problems that he is trying to solve.[88]

This to me indicates that historians choose pieces for canons based on preferences and available problems about which they argue. Whether for Dahlhaus all canons and music historical work are a subset of the one true master canon (Guillory's "imaginary totality") is a grand philosophical problem, but pragmatically does nothing to alter processes that I am describing

[86] Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[87] Dahlhaus, *Foundations*, 93.
[88] Dahlhaus, *Foundations*, 94.

above. All the canons I discuss are "chosen" and exist precisely because music scholars use them to argue for a vision of heavy metal that solves problems.

Joseph Kerman's "A Few Canonic Variations" provides several concepts and distinctions that are influential in musicological discussions about canons. He distinguishes between canon and repertory, saying that the former is the purview of critics (which includes academics) and the latter of performers.[89] This distinction is a practical and effective way of distinguishing between two spaces and their preferences, and one I am not ready to fully reject. My disagreement with Kerman's delineation is that I believe both critics and performers have canons and by extension repertoires. The line to be drawn is not between works discussed in the classroom and works played in the concert hall, but between the music itself—the repertoire that is performed, recorded, heard, or studied—and the lists and conversations that create a canon by codifying these musical acts and artifacts in the discourses of those who think and talk about music. Academics are not the exclusive discussers of music, and the phenomenon of musical sound is not the exclusive domain of performers.

In fairness to Kerman, I believe he is aware of my above delineation between canon and repertoire; he says in his opening paragraph that "a canon is an idea; a repertory is a program of action." To elaborate, canons comprise thoughts, communications, and publications that create a shared body of knowledge that is the basis for the collection of cultural capital. Repertory is, to quote Kerman summarizing arguments made by ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood, "process, action, [and] activity."[90] To be more concrete, I sketch the differences between academic and performer canons and repertoire in Table 1.1.

[89] Kerman, "A Few Canonic Variations," 107.
[90] Kerman, "A Few Canonic Variations," 107–108.

Table 1.1: Examples of Academic and Performer Canons

Group	Canon	Repertoire
Academics	Syllabi, Textbooks, Conference Programs, Publications	Anthology Music Collections (CDs or MP3s), Links to Musical Performances in Syllabi, In-class Performances
Performers	Programs, Audition Excerpt Lists	Concerts, Recordings

Perhaps my greatest departure from Kerman stems from his argument that the work, and by extension canonization, begins with written codification. "The concept of a musical work or composition, to say nothing of a canon, depends on such objectification, at least to some extent—on writing, which is not a musical but a literary mode."[91] While writing is a historically significant manner of canonization, it is rendered problematic by the existence of audio and audiovisual recordings that canonize. If a documentary, podcast, or YouTube video canonizes works, then canonization is not a literary mode, as Kerman states, but a verbal mode.[92] Kerman argues that "Charlemagne's program was the first instance of canon-formation in Western music, and one thing to keep in mind about it is that it called for texts, for written records." Yet this observation is inaccurate for two reasons. The first is that before the textual records of Gregorian chant there were verbal understandings of the canon that became the texts; as Anna Maria Busse Berger argues for Notre Dame polyphony, "there is every reason to investigate the possibility that this repertory was orally transmitted and that memory played a role in its creation."[93] The second is that we can reasonably assume there were, somewhere in the Western world, instances

[91] Kerman, "A Few Canonic Variations," 108.
[92] Kerman, "A Few Canonic Variations," 108.
[93] Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 2.

of verbal knowledge of superior music used to show cultural capital before chant. An example of pre-Gregorian verbal canonization might be found in ancient Greek culture, where

> hymns, paens, prosodia, dithyrambs, and other types addressed to specific gods played an essential role in religious and civic life. They not only contributed a sense of grandeur and festivity to particular occasions but also provided a means for the cultural heritage to be preserved, interpreted, and communicated. . . . The tradition of these venerable types was particularly important to conservative philosophers such as Plato because they saw it as fundamental to social structure. At the same time, the tradition made these types important to innovators because it was worthy of renewal. In each type—and especially in the nomos, the dithyramb, and the drama—a certain tension between conservative and progressive styles becomes apparent.[94]

We find in ancient Greece that philosophical positions about music model the view Collins proposes of intellectual life as "conflict and disagreement."[95] This argumentation documents a tradition of works that is cultivated, maintained, and pruned as time passes and the tradition develops. The existence of a tradition and argumentation about that tradition means the ancient Greeks had a repertoire and a canon. It seems reasonable to assume that ancient Greeks did not rely on the publication of texts for the production and maintenance of their canon. Thomas J. Matthiesen says that "the Aristotelian *Problemata* propose that the nomoi were so called because the preliterate peoples set their laws to music for mnemonic purposes"; this indicates that the ancestors of the ancient Greeks used non-textual means to remember important facts of civic life.[96] The view that canons are the result of texts, a notion evident in many of the works I cite outside of musicology, is the bias of experts who rely on the existence of texts for the production of their work.

The difference between canons and repertoires relates directly to my central argument. A major problem with academic metal canons is that, often, the canon does not match the

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[94] Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 29.
[95] Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies*, 1
[96] Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, 61.

repertoire. This is true if we accept Kerman's delineation between canon and repertoire: extreme metal is written about far more in the academy than it is heard on the radio or in concert; it does not seem reasonable to suggest that Cannibal Corpse or Cradle of Filth have a greater sonic presence, in terms of quantity, than AC/DC or Guns 'n' Roses. And it is still true if we accept that all groups have canons and repertoires, though I admit this may complicate assessment. Metal fans seek cultural capital through finding common points of knowledge through canons. This knowledge, cultivated in an effort to show cultural capital, does not necessarily overlap with the music a fan spends their time listening to; it is easier to name drop a Beethoven figure than to convince others of the importance of a personal favorite when the goal is to make an impact socially. Ultimately, the difference between canons and repertoires must be determined by the object of study, rather than the producer of the knowledge of phenomena in question.

Though not specifically about canon formation, one of Kerman's most astute observations comes from his *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology*.

> As the embattled defenders of the traditional canon of Western art music in the world echoing with music of all categories, classes, eras, tribes, and cultures, the analysts seem to want to look more and more closely at less and less music. Schenker revered J. S. and C. P. E. Bach, Handel, the Viennese classicists, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms, rejected Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, and Verdi, ignored all music earlier than Bach, and vilified all later than Brahms. . . . In the last fifty years or so, older music has been widely published, played, broadcast, and recorded; it has become a part of every listener's experience. To ignore it is to bury one's head in the sand. Nobody, I take it, will care to argue that the music of Dufay, Josquin, Byrd, and Monteverdi is all too weak—too primitive for analysis, or too inartistic to promote the aesthetic response which, as I have insisted, almost always stands behind analysis. As we shall see, avant-garde theorists have argued that preoccupation with the traditional canon and its standards on the part of the tonal theorists has distorted their view of more modern music. However this may be, it does appear to have shut them off almost completely from more ancient music.[97]

[97] Joseph Kerman, *Contemplating Music: Challenges to Musicology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 70–71.

Though dated in many ways with regards to the contemporary field of music theory, this does point out that an academic field—one known to most music school students in some fashion—had biases that impacted what was included and excluded in their canon. These biases did not always make sense in terms of the applicability of methodologies or the validity of arguments when applied to music outside the canon. Nonetheless, analysts needed to *defend* their canon, and this canon seemed to Kerman to grow smaller and smaller as available music grew larger and larger.

This same behavior of scholars defending an increasingly narrow canon can be seen in the second canon of metal music. In his 2013 essay "Music at a Standstill," Kahn-Harris laments the disappearance of transgression in the contemporary metal scene.

> Although some forms of extreme metal still retain their power to shock, whole swathes of metal that once had the same effect—think of classic bands like Iron Maiden—rarely attract comment these days. Transgression in metal does not have the power it once had to both attract and alienate listeners.[98]

By not distinguishing between transgressiveness as a historically and culturally situated aesthetic and transgressiveness as a force of historical progression, Kahn-Harris reifies his preferred metal aesthetic at the expense of the progression he relies on for the creation of his "extreme modernity," his historical march toward the utopia of true metalness. This impulse to retreat to those things that still shock when so much of what once was transgressive now feels mundane leads to the sort of "looking more and more closely at less and less music" Kerman highlights because the pool for what counts as transgressive cannot grow if we are unwilling to accept new standards of transgression.

[98] Keith Kahn-Harris, "Music at a Standstill," *Souciant*, December 12, 2013, http://souciant.com/2013/12/music-at-a-standstill/.

Lydia Goehr's *Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, though not technically a work of musicology, contributes significantly to the discussion of the role of musical works in the Western art music canon.[99] Arguing our present concept of the musical work emerged around 1800, Goehr writes that the conception of music as a fully formed entity that exists independently of its instances of performance and historical context has had a profound impact on canon formation in the Western tradition.

> One way to bring music of the past into the present, and then into the sphere of timelessness, was to strip it of its original, local, and extra-musical meanings. By severing all such connections, it was possible to think of it now as functionless. All one had to do next was impose upon the music meanings appropriate for the new aesthetic. Many musicians proceeded, therefore, to conceive of past music in the romantic terms of works. The canonization of dead composers and the formation of a musical repertoire of transcendent masterpieces was the result.[100]

Goehr points out this canonization provided "constancy and standardization, processes which provided musicians with exemplars and standards by which to gauge their own activities."[101] The stripping of various meanings as a technique for canonization is one way of viewing the difference between my second and third canons. The second canon, though aware of the diversity of metal culture and music, aims to situate the aesthetics of extreme metal in universal and abstract terms like "transgressive" and "serious."[102] The third, though sharing much of its canon with the second, looks to understand original and local meanings in an effort to show similarities and differences in how extreme metal is received in culturally distinct places. Paul D. Greene's "Electronic and Affective Overdrive: Tropes of Transgression in Nepal's Heavy Metal Scene" shows that Nepali heavy metal fans saw themselves as joining a global community of metal fans

[99] Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, rev. ed. with new introduction and foreword by Richard Taruskin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[100] Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, 247.
[101] Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum*, 247.
[102] For transgressive, see Kahn-Harris, "*Extreme Metal*." For an example of serious, see Michelle Phillipov, "Extreme Music for Extreme People?: Norwegian Black Metal and Transcendent Violence," in *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures*, 152–165.

through their use of heavy metal to express their anger about local conditions. His scholarship challenges the popular scholarly view that heavy metal operates as a local criticism of global issues.[103] Both canons engage with this work-inspired tradition, but the former embraces it critically, while the latter critiques it in an effort to stress the need of culturally situated knowledge.

Marcia Citron's *Gender and the Musical Canon* draws on critical and feminist methodologies to examine canon formation and the reasons why the musicological canon (at the time of publication) excludes women. Citron acknowledges the existence of multiple canons, saying "there are many canons in music and they interact in varied and often complex ways." She too acknowledges the existence of kinds of canons, such as those that contain repertoire and those that she calls "disciplinary" that contain the

> goals, methodologies, research conventions, institutions, social structures, belief systems, underlying theories, audience, language, subjects for study, and various other parameters that shape and define a discipline's self-view of what is standard, acceptable, and even desirable.[104]

Whereas Citron separates canons based on whether they contain music or thought, I would argue that in many cases this separation is blurred or even non-existent. Putting Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, on a syllabus or concert program is an act so loaded with meaning that it resists the simple designation of "repertoire"; for me it checks several of the disciplinary boxes Citron mentions above. Thus, the extent of the separation of thought and repertoire is likely best determined on a case-by-case basis, as it would be dependent on the overall awareness of a particular audience or audience member. Regardless, all of these points summarized above

[103] Paul D. Greene, "Electronic and Affective Overdrive: Tropes of Transgression in Nepal's Heavy Metal Scene," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 121. He summarizes on 133: "Thus, listening to heavy metal is at once an act of self-differentiation from one's local aesthetic and cultural context, and also a sustained practice of intense affective experience. Perhaps it is this affective experience that metalheads share around the world, even though they may rage against markedly different social and cultural limitations and circumstances."
[104] Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon*, 5–19.

are resonant with my research; canons exclude, they interact with other canons in various complex ways, and canons can contain intellectual and moral information alongside musical phenomena and texts. Though dated by its concern with musicological discussions from the early 1990s, and its predating at least two waves of feminism, Citron's understanding of canons and their power resonates strongly with my own.[105]

The edited collection *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons* provides numerous valuable perspectives from musicology, ethnomusicology, and music theory centered around the notion of academic disciplines and a Foucault-inspired sense of the disciplining nature of a visible, exemplary body of composers and works that controls who is inside and outside the boundaries of a canon.[106] Of particular import for my work is Gary Tomlinson's "Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies." Tomlinson argues that Miles Davis's jazz fusion work was repeatedly denied a place in the jazz canon because of "a snobbish distortion of history by jazz purists attempting to insulate their cherished classics from the messy marketplace in which culture has always been negotiated."[107] The example of jazz fusion is particularly poignant for discussions of abject subgenres of metal like nü metal, whose appeal Smialek says "was rooted in its assimilation of rap, electronic dance music, and other styles, displacing metal's prior emphasis on instrumental virtuosity to instead emphasize rhythmic groove."[108] While this is valuable for understanding why members of the second canon exclude non-extreme metal, I reassert here that the existence of multiple canons within a given musical tradition allows for

[105] Citron accounted for the progress made since publication of *Gender and the Musical Canon* in "Women and the Western Art Canon: Where Are We Now?," *Notes* 64 (December 2007): 209–15.
[106] My summary is derived from Katherine Bergeron's "Prologue: Disciplining Music," in *Disciplining Music,* 1–9.
[107] Gary Tomlinson, "Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White Historian Signifies," in *Disciplining Music*, 82.
[108] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," 77.

combatting this exclusion through presenting jazz fusion or nü metal as part of a canon where cultural capital circulates within the canonizing community.

There has been a recent reinvigoration of interest in the canon. On July 24, 2017, NPR published Ann Powers's "A New Canon: In Pop Music, Women Belong at the Center of the Story," which highlights the creation of a list of the 150 greatest albums by women and women-centered groups.[109] And on August 9 of the following year came Talia Schlanger's "'More a Conversation than a Canon': How Do We Decide Greatness in the Present Tense?," which does the same for the 200 greatest songs by twenty-first-century women as chosen by a group of women and non-binary writers.[110] The conference "The Idea of Canon in the Twenty-First Century," held at Smith College in September 2018, noted in its conference announcement that "the idea of the Western musical canon has been largely suspended as an object of critical academic scrutiny since the foundational disciplinary challenges of the 1980s and 1990s." Through its presentations, the conference looked to update understandings of the places canons exist and whether they still serve as mechanisms of social power and exclusion.[111] Though not constituting a body of published scholarly work as substantial as the one that I outline above from the 1980s and 1990s, these examples serve as evidence that further work on the canon is merited as part of an effort toward greater recognition of historically marginalized communities within musical canons.

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[109] Ann Powers, "A New Canon: In Pop Music, Women Belong at the Center of the Story," NPR, July 24, 2017, https://www.npr.org/2017/07/24/538601651/a-new-canon-in-pop-music-women-belong-at-the-center-of-the-story.
[110] Talia Schlanger, "'More a Conversation than a Canon': How Do We Decide Greatness in the Present Tense?," NPR, August 9, 2018, https://www.npr.org/2018/08/09/635043795/more-a-conversation-than-a-canon-how-do-we-decide-greatness-in-the-present-tense.
[111] See "Conference: The Idea of Canon in the Twenty-First Century," University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Humanities and & Fine Arts Department of Music and Dance Events, accessed 3/23/2022, https://www.umass.edu/music/event/conference-idea-canon-twenty-first-century.

My work builds upon this lineage by expanding the possible communities within which we can find canons. Our only limits are the ability to identify these canons within a community and a field (in the Bourdieuan sense) where the community can interact with others. With the existence of the internet, the possibilities for interactions of canons are endless. This is perhaps the greatest reason why I find the need for an expanded acknowledgement of who gets to canonize; it is entirely possible, though difficult to quickly prove, that a person with a popular YouTube channel has more power to canonize than a scholar with a published monograph. I do not think this devalues musicological work; it just puts an additional pressure on us to situate our work and canons in the context of other known canons that have importance with the communities whose music we study.

I also expand on what counts as canonization by including all verbal acts, rather than just written ones. I acknowledge the room for ambiguity in this distinction; not all texts are written. Thus, recorded instances of canonization can be considered as texts, and canonization would still be the result of texts, supporting Kerman's above argument. I can accept this for some recordings, but am still uneasy with abandoning verbal canonization due to the proliferation of types of recordings. To provide a hypothetical example: an academic paper is presented via livestream at a virtual conference. This paper introduces a noteworthy addition to the evolving jazz canon. An attendee records the lecture. Where did the canonization happen? I would argue in several places: in the written copy of the talk (if it exists), in the talk itself, heard live by the audience, and in the recording. The most effective means of canonization was the talk until either the paper or recording is distributed in such a way that it reaches more people than the original talk. While writings and recordings have the ability to canonize more effectively than non-textual

verbal events in the long term, this should not negate the canonization that happens in non-textual canonizing events.

Chapter Overview

The remainder of this dissertation will be dedicated to the three canons mentioned at the start of this chapter, each with its own chapter. As a canon is an imaginary totality understood not by looking at the whole but at segments, I provide in each chapter a table of representative bands drawn from scholarship central to the canon in question. The first canon uses Walser's *Running with the Devil* and Weinstein's *Heavy Metal: The Music and its Culture*, the second Kahn-Harris's *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*, and the third uses Wallach, Berger, and Greene's *Metal Rules the Globe*. Each table organizes bands into relevant subgenres so that readers can see the general makeup and dominant style(s) of the relevant canon. As the three canons are presented in chronological order, the second and third tables build upon the ones introduced in previous chapters in order to show commonalities and departures.

Chapter 2, which focuses on the first canon, argues that metal studies started as a defense of metal music and culture in light of attacks from a number of sources, including rock journalists, conservative politicians, and scholars. The attacks of the rock journalists were primarily aimed at the perceived lack of intelligence of metal fans and the apoliticality of the music. Scholars of the first canon responded to these attacks by arguing that metal fans engaged with politics in an indirect fashion that emphasized broader, systemic concerns rather than specific issues. I situate the conservative attacks from politicians and scholars within a moral panic in the broader culture in the 1980s, using the United States Senate hearings on rock lyrics as the focal point. My table for this chapter shows the stylistic breadth of the first canon. Yet

within this breadth Walser emphasized the music of popular bands and Weinstein the underground bands that were part of thrash and what would come to be known as extreme metal. I use musicological analysis to show the stylistic variety of the first canon; AC/DC's "Back in Black," Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train," Slayer's "South of Heaven," and Cannibal Corpse's "Butchered at Birth" evince a spectrum of styles that range from pop music with guitar solos to frenetic cacophonies of drumming, dissonant guitar riffs, and screamed vocals. In the end, it is Weinstein's view of the metal studies canon, rather than Walser's, that has the most influence on the second and third canons in privileging underground and extreme metal bands at the expense of those that are more popular and palatable.

Chapter 3 says scholars of the second canon defend extreme metal by arguing it is serious music appreciated by connoisseurs. Extreme metal fans contrast the seriousness of extreme metal with the frivolousness of abject bands in order to bolster the importance of extreme metal, and in doing so create a binary which establishes good and bad taste in the community. To give context for how seriousness is understood by scholars and fans of the second canon, I provide theory and examples to illustrate seriousness in the metal community, in the academy, and in nineteenth-century Germany in the context of its emergent nationhood. The boundaries of good and bad taste are shown in the table for the second canon; Kahn-Harris adds a disproportionate amount of extreme metal bands to the canon, does not canonize many bands from the popular categories emphasized by Walser, and includes abject bands as token references to frivolousness in order to highlight the seriousness of extreme metal. I analyze the song "Freak on a Leash" by Korn to demonstrate the stylistic traits that make the song identifiable as nü metal, including its use of detuned guitars, groove-based drumming, references to hip hop, the use of slap bass, and its angsty lyrics. I then provide examples of second canon seriousness from the work of Kahn-

Harris and the publication from the 2009 *Hideous Gnosis* conference on black metal theory, a conference that included scholars now significant in metal studies and that was written about by the *New York Times*.

Primarily the domain of anthropologists, folklorists, and ethnomusicologists, the third canon outlined in Chapter 4 asserts that the metal community is a global entity that resists oppressive, systemic political forces. The table for this chapter maintains the stylistic breadth of the first canon, but disproportionately emphasizes extreme metal that comes from outside the geographical centers of power in the metal world. Though much of the music from these geographically marginalized bands is stylistically indistinguishable from metal music on other parts of the planet, some bands choose to add elements to their music taken from local or regional non-metal music; this hybrid music is common in this canon and is doubly interesting to third canon scholars for its being oppressed at both the metal and the geographic levels. Though I am a fan of this scholarship for giving voice to the oppressed, I criticize it for uncritically valorizing resistance in metal music and for the way it approaches metal as folklore (instead of as popular music) in order to justify its defense of the music and its "folk."

In my conclusion, I analyze music from the band Rage Against the Machine in an effort to canonize them. As Rage Against the Machine is a popular, non-extreme band whose leftist politics and egalitarian stances match the values of the ISMMS, my work in the conclusion exemplifies my proposed move toward canonizing what is good in metal music.

The Breadth of Metal Studies and Future Research Directions

Lest anyone think I have such grand aspirations or capabilities, I must state that I am not creating a historiography of metal studies in this dissertation by studying three canons. There are

numerous canons in metal studies, and I am covering just three. Further, scholars tend to organize their work around scholarly concepts and discourses, rather than canons of music. A true historiography of metal studies would be concerned not only with the history and development of metal canons in scholarship, but with the scholarly discourses that organize conferences and the concepts that spawn likeminded work or fierce debate. I do not cover in this dissertation many significant canons, discourses, and concepts in metal studies.

A possible future direction for work stemming from this dissertation would be to expand it into a historiography of metal studies. A historiography of metal studies would be a rich work that accounts for something closer to a Platonic whole of the discipline than the narrower segments of metal studies I discuss here. It would require familiarization with any number of scholarly epistemologies, conversations, and events that are outside of my present expertise. I can accept this might be viewed as a weakness of my dissertation. However, I do not think this invalidates my goal in doing this work, which is to acknowledge a breadth of metal music that is marginalized or ignored by much of metal music studies because of the need to participate in scholarly arguments in the field.

Because my work is best understood and assessed when readers have some familiarity with the prominent discourses of metal studies, there is merit to providing a summary of these conversations for readers who lack this knowledge. Due to the focused nature of the next three chapters, I have intentionally limited my discussions in each of those chapters to those discourses directly related to the canons in question. However, I do not want this to give the impression that metal studies is a narrow field, or that these conversations are not meaningful for my arguments or the understanding of metal studies I present in my dissertation. There are three discourses in

particular that are worth mentioning here due to their excellence and influence on my thinking: those related to gender, race, and queerness.

Metal scholarship that focuses on gender uses critical and feminist methodologies to understand problematic performances or portrayals of gender in metal culture. These gender portrayals include the hypermasculinity found in much of extreme metal, androgyny in popular forms of metal as a manner to coping with the anxieties of enacting masculinity in a patriarchal society, and the sexualization or removal of women from metal imagery and videos as a way of exerting control. Walser touches on all of the above gender displays, and the latter two at length, in the fourth chapter of *Running with the Devil*, "Forging Masculinity: Heavy Metal Sounds and Images of Gender." Walser notably theorizes the "exscription" of women to show how metal fantasies of masculine independence rely on a moving away from "feminine" relationships of intimacy and dependence.[112] Rosemary Lucy Hill challenges the scholarly narratives of male domination and the centrality of masculinity in metal through ethnographic research on how women take pleasure in metal and hard rock.[113] Rosemary Overell's research on the brutal (*burutaru* in Japanese) aesthetic in the grindcore scene in Osaka further disrupts the centrality of masculinity and masculine independence in metal studies theory due to the ways in which live events create collective, incorporeal experiences for scene members.[114]

Though there is a notable focus on extreme metal in this gender discourse due to extreme metal's flagrantly problematic portrayals of hypermasculinity, much metal studies scholarship on gender decenters extreme metal by focusing on metal's popular forms. Hill's work notably

[112] Walser, "Forging Masculinity: Heavy Metal Sounds and Images of Gender," in *Running with the Devil*, 108–36.
[113] Rosemary Lucy Hill, "Masculine Pleasure?: Women's Encounters with Hard Rock and Metal Music," in *Global Metal Music and Culture*, 277–93.
[114] Rosemary Overell, "Brutal Masculinity in Osaka's Extreme-Metal Scene," in *Heavy Metal, Gender, and Sexuality: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 245–57.

acknowledges that metal fans appreciate music that falls far from metal and metal adjacent genres.[115] I show in my third chapter that open appreciation of non-extreme metal and non-metal music signals a lack of moral seriousness in parts of the extreme metal community that allows those who possess moral seriousness to label offenders as posers; Hill's work serves as a direct challenge to this hardline position. Thus the gender discourse in metal studies offers not only a valuable counterdiscourse to the theoretical centrality of masculinity in metal fandom, but also to the dominance of extreme metal.

Discourses on race in metal studies focus on what Laina Dawes calls "relationships between ethno-cultures within the same country who share the same national identity." By looking at marginalized, intersectional identities of black fans who are women or queer, Dawes challenges portrayals of metal scenes as havens for white men and as homogenous and apolitical imagined communities that lack racism, sexism, and homophobia.[116] Kevin Fellezs combats the assumption that thrash is a white subgenre by locating the music and its musicians in the racially and ethnically diverse San Francisco Bay Area scene of the 1980s.[117] Fellezs provides the example of the all black, Bay Area thrash band Stone Vengeance, who link their music to the Delta blues.[118] This discourse also features the growing body of work on Latin American metal that includes the previously mentioned scholarship of Nelson Varas-Días and María De La Luz Núñez's work on Peruvian "mestizo metal."[119]

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[115] Hill, "Masculine Pleasure," 283.
[116] Laina Dawes, *What Are You Doing Here?: A Black Woman's Life and Liberation in Heavy Metal* (New York: Bazillion Points, 2012; Laina Dawes, "Challenging an 'Imagined Community': Discussions (or Lack Thereof) of Black and Queer Experiences within Heavy Metal Culture," *Metal Music Studies* 1 (2015): 385–93.
[117] Kevin Fellezs, "Voracious Souls: Race and Place in the Formation of the San Francisco Bay Area Thrash Scene," in *Global Metal Music and Culture*, 89–105.
[118] Kevin Fellezs, "Black Metal Soul Music: Stone Vengeance and the Aesthetics of Race in Heavy Metal," in *Controversies and Countercultures*, 182–200.
[119] María De La Luz Núñez, "The Stones Sing: The Mestizo Metal Music of Kav Pacha and Yana Raymi," in *Metal Music Studies 7* (2021): 129–38.

Metal studies scholarship on queerness serves as a critique of the assumption, extant since the works of Walser and Weinstein, that heavy metal is exclusively the domain of heterosexual men. Amber Clifford-Napoleone outlines this problem when she says that

> heavy metal scholarship has focused almost solely on the roles of heterosexual hypermasculinity and hyperfemininity in fans and performers. The dependence on that narrow dichotomy has limited heavy metal scholarship and has resulted in poorly critiqued discussions of gender and sexuality that serve only to underpin the popular imagining of heavy metal as violent, homophobic, and inherently masculine.[120]

Clifford-Napoleone's focus on queerness in metal allows her to build a canon that largely ignores the predominance of extreme metal in metal studies; the first six mentions of bands in her monograph *Metal Bent* are glam band Pink Stëël (who bill themselves as "harder than Liza, gayer than Kiss"), Mötley Crüe and Twisted Sister as glam reference points for Pink Stëël, Torche (who resist categorization according to their website, but sound to me similar to "Stoner" bands like Baroness and Red Fang), and progressive metal bands Cynic and Exivious.[121] Outside of a section on Gaahl of Norwegian black metal band Gorgoroth, who is gay, there is very little to be found about extreme metal in Clifford-Napoleone's book. Clifford-Napoleone's ability to largely ignore extreme metal makes sense given her view of the way that heavy metal culture is broadly structured. "I do not think there is simply one formation of heavy metal; rather, there are layers of subculture and scenes overlapping each other, and within each of those layers is a queerscape."[122] This view, similar to my view of their being multiple canons in metal music, opens a great many avenues for conversations about metal music and culture that do not perpetuate the centrality of extreme metal. Other work in this discourse includes Laina Dawes's

[120] Amber R. Clifford-Napoleone, *Queerness in Heavy Metal Music: Metal Bent* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 3.
[121] Clifford-Napoleone, *Queerness in Heavy Metal Music*, 1–2; "Band Bio," *Torche*, accessed 4/3/2023, https://www.torchemusic.com/about.
[122] Amber R. Clifford-Napoleone, "Metal, Masculinity, and the Queer Subject," in *Heavy Metal, Gender, and Sexuality: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Florian Heesch and Niall Scott (New York: Routledge, 2016), 45.

intersectional work on race, gender, and queerness, and an ethnography on virtual queer and feminist metal spaces that arose on the internet during the #MeToo movement by Louise Barrière.[123]

Contributions to Metal Studies and Musicology

My reason for doing this work, and my criticism of metal studies, is that metal studies neglects certain realities of metal music because it must be centered on canons that help to win the "metal is not bad" argument. While this neglect does not always manifest in canons that inaccurately represent metal music (as far as text can capture a complex human phenomenon), I feel this manner of canonization has two major effects, one across the body of work as a whole and one specific to the choices individuals make when they choose a work subject. The first is that there is too great a focus on extreme metal in a way that gives a skewed impression to metal studies audiences that are unaware of the broader body of metal music. Were a person to learn about metal music from metal studies alone, they would have a perspective on the music that gives undue importance to the extreme subgenres over the many others that were certainly more pervasive and arguably more important. To provide but one example, there is more work in metal studies on grindcore, an underground subgenre within extreme metal and punk with leftist subject matter and lightning-fast drum patterns called blast beats, than on the "abject" subgenre nü metal, though nü metal boasts multiple platinum artists including Slipknot, Limp Bizkit, Korn, and System of a Down.[124] The second is the very specific need in each instance of new scholarship to pick a subgenre of metal that will assist in the scholar's ability to enter into

[123] Louise Barrière, "Musique ren ligne? Une analyse de la formation de communautés queer et feminists autour des musiques metal," *MUSICultures* 48 (2021): 48–111.
[124] I have to date only encountered one book on nü metal that could be considered even vaguely scholarly: Tommy Udo's *Brave Nu World: The American Rock Counter Revolution* (London: Sanctuary, 2002).

relevant conversations. These two factors support the dominance of extreme metal in the metal studies canon; extreme metal is understood to be central, and when acts of canonization happen in the form of publications, they have a greater chance of mattering if they engage with existing canons.

The use of established canons is expected. In *Model Cases: On Canonical Research Objects and Sites*, using the metaphor of the "model organism" from biology, Monica Krause argues that the social sciences and humanities "have a canon of privileged research sites and objects in addition to a canon of texts."[125] Though what can be studied in metal studies grows ever broader, academic work still falls back on popular cases and methodologies to generate interest among other academics and situate the diversity of subject matter within frames of meaning that create communal identities and us/them boundaries for academics to situate themselves in contemporary arguments. This makes sense; academics need to be successful in their community to gain employment to make money to survive. I do not wish for this survival to stop, only for a broadening of the boundaries of possibility. Is it possible, and even beneficial, for metal studies scholars to create canons that ignore the contemporary arguments and hierarchies of metal music studies and its canons in favor of addressing broader cultural concerns?

The answer, at least according to Robert Walser, is yes. He says in *Running with the Devil*:

> I have chosen to focus on the most popular examples of heavy metal—the bands with multiplatinum record sales and arena-filling concert tours, the bands named as exemplary by fan magazines and by the fans I consulted through questionnaires and interviews: Ozzy Osbourne, Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Poison, Van Halen, Megadeth, Guns N' Roses, etc. While much interesting work could be done on less popular, "underground" metal subcultures, this study concentrates on massively popular heavy metal because that focus enables engagement with important contemporary debates over music, mass mediation, morality, and censorship. Like Stuart Hall, I see "the popular" as an important

[125] Monika Krause, *Model Cases: On Canonical Research Objects and Sites* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 1–2.

> site of social contestation and formation, and I find unconvincing the common assumption that culture that exists either at the margins of society or among a prestigious elite is necessarily more important, interesting, complex, or profound than the culture of a popular mainstream.[126]

It is my desire that this dissertation opens doors for metal studies scholars to engage with important contemporary debates, unafraid of upsetting those scholars who would prefer to continually search for what interests them in an ever-narrowing body of extreme music.

As I consider much of my dissertation to be metaphorically linked to musicology, meaning that I think many of my points stand in contexts outside of metal music, I hope that it may be of value to scholars seeking to break out of their sub-discipline's established canons to look at something new in a different way. While I am far from the first person involved with musicology to encourage looking at underserved music, I believe that arguing for an expansion of what counts as a valid object is a timely endeavor for musicologists, given recent pushes to "decolonize the canon."[127] By studying metal, a music that is at the far margins of the musicological canon, I aim to bring fresh insights to the more central arguments about "great white men" and their others.

[126] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxiii–xxiv.
[127] Margaret E. Walker, "Towards a Decolonized Music History Curriculum," *Journal of Music History Pedagogy* 10 (2020): 1–19.

Chapter 2

The First Canon - Early Metal Studies

At the beginning of Sam Dunn's documentary *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, Dunn has a self-reflexive moment in which he describes himself, his metal fandom, and his graduate-level academic training in order to establish his biases and culturally situated expertise.[1] While for the average viewer this may just seem like a nice "ice breaker," what is clear to those who have knowledge of metal studies is that Dunn's self-reflexive introduction serves to situate him and his work within the burgeoning field. During these scenes, Dunn says,

> at 19 I went to university, and since metal studies wasn't on the curriculum, I decided to major in anthropology. Anthropology is the study of human cultures, and I loved it because I got to explore societies vastly different than my own. For my graduate degree, I traveled to Central America and wrote my thesis on the struggles of Guatemalan refugees. But there's always been one culture that I've really wanted to study: heavy metal. This music has millions of passionate fans worldwide. Yet for 35 years it's been consistently stereotyped, dismissed, and condemned. I know. I've been defending it since I was twelve years old. Why has metal provoked such polar reactions? I need to answer this question.[2]

Dunn wishes to defend heavy metal through the study of its people and culture. Later in the documentary he talks about metal's history with censorship and focuses on the infamous 1985 Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) Senate hearings. He interviews metal fans who say that metal is their passion that informs their way of life, while also serving as a reflection of and escape from their feelings of anger and isolation in a tough world. Many of the above-mentioned ideas are discussed in the formative works of metal studies. It is evident based on what Dunn says and how he presents himself that his methodological and epistemological frameworks stem

[1] On this manner of reflexivity, see, for instance, Jay Ruby, *A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive Perspectives in Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982).
[2] *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, directed by Sam Dunn, Scot McFayden, and Jessica Joy Wise (Toronto: Banger Films, 2005), DVD, starting at 3:39.

from three sources: his anthropological training, early scholarship on metal music, and his experiences as a fan.

To further demonstrate his anthropological background and knowledge of metal scholarship, Dunn shows himself doing research in a library during the later portion of this self-reflexive scene. While the scholarly offerings oriented toward metal fans were somewhat limited before the film's debut in 2005, Dunn's choices of texts show the formative signs of an early canon of metal scholarship. In the library, Dunn is intently focused on Robert Walser's *Running With the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, while Harris Berger's *Metal, Rock, and Jazz* sits under a copy of Gavin Baddely's history of Satanism and metal, *Lucifer Rising*.[3] Later in the film, he interviews not only Robert Walser but also Deena Weinstein and Keith Kahn-Harris, all of whom provide some form of expert knowledge about metal music and culture.[4] While showing his scholarly credentials and connections was necessary for the cultural capital Dunn sought through his work, the participation of academics in Dunn's documentary is an important bit of evidence in our examination of the early metal studies canon. The film demonstrates how a certain segment of academia in the 1990s and early 2000s was attuned to the issues that concerned metal fans because they themselves were fans who were defending metal against those who, in Dunn's words, "stereotyped, dismissed, and condemned."[5]

This chapter argues that early metal music studies was defined by its defending metal music and culture against its detractors—metal is not bad, to rephrase the central argument of

[3] Walser, *Running with the Devil*; Berger, *Metal, Rock, and Jazz*; Gavin Baddely, *Lucifer Rising: A Book of Sin, Devil Worship, and Rock 'n' Roll* (Medford, NJ: Plexus Publishing, 2010).
[4] Dunn, McFayden, and Wise, dirs.., *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*. Dunn reads *Running with the Devil* at 4:01. The Weinstein interview occurs at 10:40, Walser at 13:24, and Kahn-Harris at 1:24:38.
[5] Dunn, McFayden, and Wise, dirs., *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, 4:13.

metal studies discussed in Chapter 1. Metal scholars defended the genre against attacks from rock critics who thought metal lacked sophistication and political awareness. The same scholars rebuffed conservative attacks on metal's moral and musical qualities; I analyze the PMRC Senate hearings as a means of further demonstrating this conservative agenda. I compare the scholarship of the two central members of the early metal canon, Robert Walser and Deena Weinstein, to show how their differing defenses of metal relied on the same canon but emphasized different musical styles that matched their musical preferences and suited their arguments. By drawing on examples of canons from their works in the form of "best of" lists, I create a table that illustrates this disparity. I then pull four musical examples from this table, AC/CD's "Back in Black," Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train," Slayer's "Angel of Death," and Cannibal Corpse's "Butchered at Birth," in order to show the stylistic breadth of this canon in contrast to the canons I analyze in later chapters. I conclude by showing how Weinstein's preferences foreshadowed the dominance of extreme metal in the second and third metal studies canons.

Forging Metal Studies: Attacks and Defenses from the Right and Left

In *The Ethics of Identity*, Kwame Anthony Appiah recounts the infamous Robbers Cave experiment, which he dubs "something of a classic in the social sciences."[6] In the experiment, two groups of pre-teen boys from similar white, middle-class, Protestant backgrounds were brought to a remote, wooded site. After being kept separate for a short period of time, the groups were informed of each other's existence by the staff. Upon interacting, the two groups formed a fierce rivalry. From this rivalry they created contrasting group names and identities. The rugged

[6] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 62–64.

and verbally profane Rattlers' battles with the pious and principled Eagles culminated when one of the groups planned a retaliatory act that involved throwing stones. Appiah punctuates his summary with the remarkable fact that "all this arose in just four days."[7]

Appiah uses the Robbers Cave experiment to illustrate the point that collective identities produce cultural differences, rather than the other way around. Providing examples like how Hinduism emerged as a result of English colonists needing a name for the non-monotheists of India, Appiah concludes that "cultural identities arise . . . as the consequence, not the cause, of conflicts."[8] As we will see in the coming pages, this is true for the formation of metal studies, which arose due to conflicts that targeted heavy metal as being an inferior musical and cultural product. The collective identities that argued that "metal is bad" brought into existence a collective identity that argued, as mentioned in Chapter 1, that "metal is not bad." This "not bad" collective would later come to be known as metal studies, and in naming itself would begin to form a culture through conferences and publications.

An Early Metal Studies Canon?

Metal studies, like many disciplines, movements, or historical periods, did not exist in name at the time of its origin. Rather, metal studies is a term retroactively applied to a collection of work that was not intended to be grouped together in such a way; its creation served a later need for disciplinary boundaries that allowed for academic work about metal to be evaluated on its own terms, rather than by the standards of another discipline. This is important because while I discuss these scholarly works as part of a period in order to demonstrate how later periods borrowed or deviated from this foundational moment, the works were not shaped by the

[7] Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, 63.
[8] Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*, 64.

disciplinary boundaries of metal studies. These unknowing foundational texts, written in the early 1990s, were responding both to the cultural pervasiveness of popular metal and to the requirements and paradigms of existing disciplines, including musicology, sociology, cultural studies, and anthropology.

Just as metal studies did not have an intentional foundational moment that coincides with its first scholarship, the idea of a functional "early metal studies canon" is a retrospective construct rather than a concept in the minds of its creators. While the authors of these works clearly understood the existence of a canon in metal culture broadly, metal studies as a field did not yet exist, and the power of the early metal studies canon to shape its discipline only emerged as the field came into being. Yet a close examination of the early metal studies canon is important, for two reasons. First, the selection of bands or other subject matter in these works is shaped by the academic concern of winning arguments within the scholarly community. Second, while the overwhelming presence of metal music in popular culture during the late 1980s could not be ignored by these scholars, certain segments of metal music could be emphasized or deemphasized to fit the musical preferences and academic goals of a particular scholar. This emphasis manifests on a stylistic continuum that ranges from popular to underground. Many of the underground subgenres are part of what would later come to be known as extreme metal. Establishing these two facts allows us to see how later shifts in academic concerns forged new canons.

Metal Music Studies' Origins and Foundational Arguments

Metal studies began in the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to attacks on metal by conservative politicians, scholars, religious leaders, and other "cultural experts" who believed

that metal had a negative impact on society and wished to impose various forms of censorship.[9] Such attacks were not unique in rock history; from Elvis being scorned for his hip gyrations to accusations that Led Zeppelin backmasked Satanic messages onto their records, rock music's rebellion against societal norms was an easy target for conservatives who either misunderstood the music or sowed misunderstanding to bolster their moral capital. Like with the music and musicians in these previous moral panics, the music and culture of metal musicians was meant to be polarizing in order to be appealing to those who chose to support it.[10]

The polarizing nature of metal appreciation divided scholars into supporters and detractors as well, regardless of any methodological claims to impartiality. Andy R. Brown suggests metal studies begins with Foucauldian "fault lines" at the disciplinary divide between psychology-based studies aiming to determine the ways in which metal negatively influences adolescent behavior and "an alliance of social science and humanities approaches" which sought to counter this negative perception of the music and its culture. These lines focused the debates on issues surrounding the behavioral consequences of listening to heavy metal, the types of people who listen to metal, and the relationship between scholar and subject with regard to responsibilities of representation.[11]

While this is an invaluable contribution to understanding the origins of the field, these debates were not solely academic; they existed in American culture broadly before academic work on them took shape. The ability to publish on issues of current cultural relevance lent instant cultural capital to academic work on metal, both pro- and anti-metal, because such work was not solely interested in examining "the music and culture itself," but addressed larger

[9] For more on the origins of metal studies, see Brown, "Heavy Genealogy," 213–43.
[10] For more on moral panics and metal, see Brown, "Suicide Solutions," 17–35.
[11] Brown, "Heavy Genealogy," 215–23.

concerns about freedom of speech, broadcasting standards, and American cultural boundaries. Thus, early metal studies work should be considered in a broader cultural context.

Another problem with Brown's formulation is that the attacks on metal were not solely from conservatives but also from countercultural rock critics and pro-rock authors and scholars who, in Walser's words, "display unabashed prejudice when it comes to heavy metal."[12] Such criticisms only intensified the need to defend metal because the war was now on two fronts: on one the moral-crusading outsiders, and on the other the rock intelligentsia insiders. Both Weinstein and Walser included passages to demonstrate this prejudice; they both begin chapters on critical responses to the music with a quotation from rock journalist Robert Duncan's *The Noise: Notes from a Rock 'n' Roll Era* that colorfully demonstrates the rock-insider critical dislike:

> Heavy metal: pimply, prole, putrid, unchic, unsophisticated, anti-intellectual (but impossibly pretentious), dismal, abysmal, terrible, horrible, and stupid music, barely music at all . . . music made *by* slack-jawed, alpaca-haired, bulbous-inseamed imbeciles in jackboots and leather and chrome *for* slack-jawed, alpaca-haired, down-mustachioed imbeciles in cheap, too-large T-shirts with pictures of comic-book Armageddon ironed on the front.[13]

Walser includes a passage from pop-culture writer Marc Eliot that says "Today's 'hot' rock is heavy metal, this generation's disco, an apolitical sound more concerned with the conquest of women than the triumph of the spirit."[14] Weinstein includes a passage from rock journalist J. D. Considine in *Musician* that says heavy metal was "a musical moron joke, fodder for frustrated teens and dominion of dim-witted devil-worshippers."[15] These tirades and others portray metal

[12] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 20.
[13] Quoted by Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 20, and by Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 1. Originally in Robert Duncan, *The Noise: Notes from a Rock 'n' Roll Era* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1984), 36–37.
[14] Marc Eliot, *Rockonomics: The Money Behind the Music* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1989), 247–48, in Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 20.
[15] J. D. Considine, "Purity and Power," *Musician*, September 1984, 46. In Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, 2.

music and its fans as stupid, adolescent, and disgusting, and characterize the music as noisy, unsophisticated, and "barely music at all" even for people who liked rock 'n' roll. Metal musicians and fans often worshipped the devil and lusted after women. Worst of all, they were apolitical in rock music, a genre founded, in the eyes of these writers, on resisting cultural conservativism.

Defending Against the Rock Critics

The defense of early metal music took a complicated stance that needed to prove that it was not only *not* the music of a degenerate, devil-worshipping adolescent cabal, but further that it was substantial based on the standards of the rock intelligentsia. One of the defenders of metal in the press was Duncan's colleague at *Creem* magazine Lester Bangs, who points out how Black Sabbath are easy targets of criticism from hypocritical proponents of clean-cut artists like James Taylor.[16] Related to their music being called "downer" rock for its association with taking barbiturates, he says

> lots of Black Sabbath fans take down[er]s, but there are certainly many that don't, and just as many barbiturate and heroin casualties that have no truck at all with the group, including many of those devotees of the mellow acoustic sound who are supposedly into healthier lifestyles than the minions of the music of desperation; if the pop audience knew how many of the heroes whose pockets they've filled were on smack right now, they . . . would probably not be the least bit surprised. But somehow it's easier to picture the kid down the block, as fucked-up as we've watched him become, slumped in his bedroom gorged on Tuinal, listening to Black Sabbath prate of the devil and nuclear war and what a cruel kitchen the world is, nodding to himself as he nods along anyway and finding justification for his cancerous apathy.[17]

Bangs at various points later in the article points out how Black Sabbath are actually moralizing Catholics who, like Bob Dylan in "Masters of War," are writing generalized criticism of the

[16] Lester Bangs, "Bring Your Mother to the Gas Chamber: Are Black Sabbath Really the New Shamans," *Creem*, June 1972: 40–45, 78–79.
[17] Bangs, "Bring Your Mother," 44.

forces of evil that they see all around them and wish to avoid. He has particular praise for the "deep, gutty, driving" song "Children of the Grave," which paints "a romanticized picture of the children born in the megaton shadow standing their ground, insistent on the salvation of the planet, with an uncharacteristic happy ending." The lyrics read:

> Revolution in their minds, the children start to march
> Against the world in which they have to live and, oh, the hate that's in their hearts
> They're tired of being pushed around and told just what to do
> They'll fight the world until they've won and love comes flowing through.[18]

By choosing the example from "Children of the Grave," he paints metal musicians and fans as anti-nuke, environmentalist revolutionaries marching against hate and for peace and love. Rather than being apolitical ignoramuses, metalheads were the dark and distorted cousins of the hippies who championed musicians like Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana, and The Who at Woodstock. They were part of the leftist vanguard, though their way of expressing it looked different enough to confuse or upset those who lacked understanding.

The defense given above by Bangs is an early example of what became an entire vein of scholarship that argues metal is made in defiance of systemic social norms. Choosing to emphasize metal's Marxist tendencies, Robert Walser writes that

> art that ignores the complexities, the decentering forces of contemporary capitalism, remains unconvincing, especially to those who have grown up knowing nothing else. For example, one young Twisted Sister fan told me that she starts feeling paranoid when she hears the "easy listening" music favored by her mother, because it so obviously seems to lie to her about the world. The heavy metal of Iron Maiden and Megadeth, on the other hand, articulates the anxieties and discontinuities of the postmodern world, but not in a way that concedes to such experiences. In their free appropriation of symbols of power, and in their material enactments of control, of hanging on in the face of frightening complexity, such heavy metal bands suggest to many that survival in the modern world is possible, that disruptions, no matter how unsettling, can be ridden out and endured.[19]

[18] Bangs, "Bring Your Mother," 44–79. Bangs misprints the lyrics as "against the world they have to live in."
[19] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 159.

Whereas for Bangs metalheads were countercultural and reacting to the political concerns of the time, for Walser they were resisting the capitalistic forces that sought to limit their freedoms and control them. While this is not unexpected—he cites Marx in his select bibliography—it shows how this line of argument could easily be tailored to various academic interests because of the pervasiveness of Marxist-inspired criticism in the academy.[20]

There are numerous other examples that postdate the first canon. Deena Weinstein, citing underground metal's pervasiveness in the working classes of globalized societies, argues that "metal is a symbolic rebellion of a compromised class, proletarian internationalism in a most imposing and surprising form."[21] She mentions specifically a statement by punk legend Jello Biafra, who noted that "death metal is the first form of rock music that has caught on with poor people all over the world."[22] Despite her claims that "as a cultural formation, metal prolongs its past into the future, maintaining older genres and adding diverse stylistic mutations," she emphasizes that it is the underground subgenres, and death metal especially, that best serve to illustrate metal's political importance to the global proletariat.[23] As we will see later, Weinstein and other metal studies scholars tended to canonize underground styles of metal because they best fit into their strategic arguments.

Jeremy Wallach argues that while metal is known to be popular in "post-industrial" Western societies, it grew in popularity in industrializing societies like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore from the late 1990s to today.[24] The youth of Southeast Asia, according to Wallach, contend with "massive political, social, and economic dislocations," and metal is an outlet that

[20] Walser, *Running with the Devil,* 220.
[21] Deena Weinstein, "The Globalization of Metal," in *Metal Rules the* Globe, 54–57.
[22] Weinstein, "Globalization of Metal," 54.
[23] Weinstein, "Globalization of Metal," 36
[24] Jeremy Wallach, "Unleashed in the East: Metal Music, Masculinity, and 'Malayness' in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore," in in *Metal Rules the Globe*," 87–88.

helps fans deal with these societal difficulties.[25] Wallach points out how Indonesian band Sekarat "independently released the song 'Rezim Dosomuko,' a scathing indictment of the authoritarian New Order government of former Indonesian president Soeharto."[26] This shows an explicit link to politics lacking in the earlier example from Lester Bangs.

Taking a different tack, Paul D. Greene argues that metal in Kathmandu, Nepal from 1999 to 2003 "transgressed against local constraints [as] it raged outward, reaching toward a perceived global heavy metal subculture."[27] Promoting an ethnographic approach to understanding metal culture, Greene shows how Nepali people find transgression in different elements of metal music. While Nepali were accustomed to distorted sounds thanks to the alpine horns that circulate in their culture, non-fans of metal were appalled by a local band Drishty's music because the growled lyrics were difficult to understand. Greene summarizes the defiance of Nepali heavy metal by saying that "the frustrations articulated by Nepali heavy metal listeners and musicians were in every case highly localized, framed in terms of the Nepali family, religious, and political condition."[28] Though the scale of the politics in Greene's Nepali case study are smaller than the global forces discussed by the other authors, local politics are politics nonetheless.

By framing metal as inherently political, in that it deals with the socio-economic systems that invite Marxist-inspired critique, advocates for the metal-is-political position gained access to conversations about politics on terms that bolstered the capital of metal in intellectual circles. Yet this effort did not convince all of metal's critics. Michelle Phillipov argues that progressive

[25] Jeremy Wallach, "Unleashed in the East," 89.
[26] Jeremy Wallach, "Unleashed in the East," 94.
[27] Greene, "Electronic and Affective Overdrive," 111–12.
[28] Greene, "Electronic and Affective Overdrive," 111–121.

critics were "troubled by the genre's apparent substitution of pleasure and escapism for political commitment," and rightly asserts that academic studies further this belief because they

> argued that fans find in the music a soundtrack that reflects their own values and experiences of anger, disenfranchisement, and preference for escapism over more "useful" forms of political engagement. Metal is understood to be an expression of post-industrial alienation and despair, but is seen as lacking punk and hip hop's politically progressive outlook.[29]

Phillipov advocates for a reorientation in criticism that focuses on evaluating death metal's musical complexity apart from automatically presumed political stances. I agree this is sometimes appropriate, but also point to the publications and documentaries of Nelson Varas-Días, whose work on metal in Latin America shows how metal is often a vehicle for explicitly addressing progressive politics.[30] It is not so simple to say metal is or isn't political, because as can be seen there is variance depending on the examples in question.

The Conservative Attack: The "Porn Rock" Senate Hearings

While we have seen that metal music's commitment to politics is debatable, the music became political in the 1980s by virtue of becoming the object of scorn from conservative political groups. In a manner akin to vaccination and mask-wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic, the cultural practice of metal music that already existed prior to any controversy was brought into the public consciousness as a means of creating symbolic, moral boundaries between differing groups. Metal music was cast as a form of popular music that transgressed the

[29] Michelle Phillipov, *Death Metal and Music Criticism: Analysis at the Limits* (New York; Lexington Books, 2012), 53.
[30] See Nelson Varas-Díaz, "Songs of Injustice: Heavy Metal in Latin America (Full Movie)," YouTube video, uploaded by Nelson Varas Diaz, April 8, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yb4u3Q1APHk and Nelson Varas-Díaz, Sigrid Mendoza, and Eric Morales, "Porous Communities: Critical Interactions Between Metal Music and Local Culture in the Caribbean Context," in *Heavy Metal Music and the Communal Experience*, ed. Nelson Varas-Díaz and Niall Scott (New York: Lexington Books, 2016), especially 117–18 where he talks about "Mestizo Metal**."**

moral norms of American culture in a manner even more startling and offensive than rock 'n' roll before it. While this manifested in many ways, the focal point of these occurrences was the 1985 United States Senate hearings on rock 'n' roll lyrics, which have become known informally as the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) hearings.

Heavy metal's cultural presence in the United States in the 1980s is unquestionable. Def Leppard's *Hysteria,* Guns N' Roses *Appetite for Destruction,* and Bon Jovi's *Slippery When Wet*, to name just three, achieved multi-platinum status in the late 1980s and would all go on to sell more than 10 million units in later decades.[31] In 1987, MTV debuted *Headbanger's Ball*, an all-metal show that featured videos, interviews with bands, and other assorted metal-focused activities. In 1988, metal accounted for as much as forty percent of record sales in the United States.[32] Unlike much current metal scholarship that discusses metal in sub-cultural terms, metal in the late 1980s *was* culture in the sense that it had media presence and monetary capital that Hebdige's punks and Thornton's ravers lacked.[33]

Metal's cultural pervasiveness in the late 1980s is made more interesting because it was targeted earlier in the decade by conservatives seeking to display their moral superiority through the establishment of othering symbolic boundaries. The most famous and impactful of these attacks came from the Parents Music Resource Center, whose membership included the Washington elites Tipper Gore and Susan Baker. In 1985, the PMRC published their "Filthy Fifteen" list of fifteen lyrical examples from contemporary musical acts that contained undesirable content including sexual explicitness, drugs and alcohol, violence, and occult subject

[31] See RIAA.com/gold-platinum for information on certified total US album sales for each of these albums.
[32] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 3.
[33] Hebdige, *Subculture*; Thornton, *Club Cultures*. See Chapter 1 for further information.

matter.[34] To be clear, the attack was not aimed explicitly at metal music. But considering nine of fifteen acts were metal music, metal was an unquestionable part of the discourse.

The PMRC also used their connections to hold a series of testimonies in front of the United States Senate designed to make Americans aware of these questionable lyrics and to advocate for the establishment of the black-and-white "Parental Advisory" labels seen on records.[35] The PMRC hearings began September 19, 1985 at ten o'clock in the morning and lasted for four hours and fifty-five minutes. Despite occurring on a single day, as well as frequent references to a singular "hearing" by participants, the event is commonly referred to as plural "hearings" in journalism and by the scholars I cite below. I will use the plural form unless it is a direct quotation.

The hearings were not small-time, closed-door sessions. Attending Senator James Exon "noted that the PMRC hearings were covered more extensively (35 television feeds and 50 still photographers) than any other legislative proceeding he had been involved in."[36] Metal music was under scrutiny from a wide body of people, and the issues circulating around it extended well beyond the scope of purely academic debate. The hearings functioned as a microcosm of the broader U.S. society's impressions of heavy metal music and culture, and inspired later lawsuits against metal acts Ozzy Osbourne and Judas Priest claiming that these metal artists encouraged youth to commit suicide due to the messages in their songs.[37]

Analysis of the Senate hearings shows clearly that the intent of holding them was twofold. First, they were held to evaluate the moral quality of the targeted music and musicians

[34] See, for instance, Kory Grow, "PMRC's 'Filthy 15': Where Are They Now?," *Rolling Stone*, September 17, 2015, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/pmrcs-filthy-15-where-are-they-now-60601/judas-priest-eat-me-alive-180934/.
[35] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling."
[36] Reebee Garofalo, "Setting the Record Straight: Censorship and Social Responsibility in Popular Music," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 6 (1994): 11.
[37] Brown, "Suicide Solutions," 17.

in the context of American Culture—the capital-C variety in which culture stands in Platonic perfection apart from the lives of people who imperfectly enact it. Second, they sought to establish an appropriate plan of action to protect those most vulnerable to the lowercase-c cultural products of these musicians. The senators who found the music distasteful, as well as any sympathetic participants, sought to establish the music as "filthy" and in the process create moral and cultural boundaries to separate the fans of this music from those who, like them, possessed taste and morality. Or, as musician Frank Zappa said in his testimony during the hearings, "the establishment of a rating system, voluntary or otherwise, opens the door to an endless parade of moral quality control programs based on things certain Christians don't like."[38]

Zappa's criticism of the PMRC was not limited to the porn rock hearings. There is a chapter in his autobiography titled "Porn Wars," in which Zappa argues fiercely that the PMRC hearings were essentially a distraction, in the form of a moral panic, from legislation being negotiated by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) to place a tax on blank cassette tapes and anti-piracy legislation.[39] He notes the RIAA legislation, which he links to a committee controlled by conservative Senator Strom Thurmond, was unethical because "it is no secret that Mrs. Thurmond is a member of [the] PMRC." He links the PMRC to fundamentalist values, saying

> the PMRC's proposal is most offensive in its "moral tone." It seeks to enforce a set of implied religious values on its victims. . . . The PMRC's request for labels regarding sexually explicit lyrics, violence, drugs, alcohol, and especially OCCULT CONTENT reads like a catalog of phenomena abhorrent to practitioners of that faith. How a person worships is a private matter, and should not be INFLICTED UPON or EXPLOITED BY others. Understanding the fundamentalist leanings of this organization, I think it is fair to wonder if their rating system will eventually be extended to inform parents as to whether

[38] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 1:30:53–1:31:04.
[39] Frank Zappa with Peter Occhiogrosso, "'Porn Wars,'" in *The Real Frank Zappa Book* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), 261–91.

> a musical group has homosexuals in it. Will the PMRC permit musical groups to exist, but only if gay members don't sing, and are not depicted on the album cover?[40]

Zappa's argument highlights the existence of a pact between fundamentalists and the recording industry that was made at the expense of musical artists and the First Amendment. Whether metal was explicitly political or not, this historical event was explicitly political and targeted heavy metal. The politicization of metal music opened an opportunity for scholars to defend metal in light of the very real threat of censorship.

In the introductory remarks to the hearings, Chairman John C. Danforth of Missouri presented a concerned (but restrained) overview of the matter at hand.

> Ladies and gentlemen, this hearing is on the subject of the content of some, and I want to underscore the word "some," not all, rock music, which it has been pointed out by a number of people as [having] really broken new ground as to the content of music and the lyrics that are used in music. There have, I suppose, always been cases of songs that are suggestive in one way or another. However, certain rock music that is now being sold deals very explicitly with sexual subjects. Some music glorifies violence in various forms, sexual violence. Some music advocates the use of drugs, drug abuse, and so on. So, the reason for this hearing is not to promote any legislation . . . but to simply provide a forum for airing the issue itself . . . for bringing it out in the public domain. . . . The point of this hearing is not for me to make any particular suggestions, but to simply provide a forum so that the whole issue can be brought to the attention of the American people.[41]

In what will become a common thread throughout the hearings, Senator Danforth suggests that this music, unlike other "suggestive" music of the past, has reached a new level of indecency that was worthy of discussion on the Senate floor so that American people could be informed regarding this issue.

The next to speak, Senator Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina, took a less tempered approach to his description of the music.

> I first want to commend the Parents Music Resource Center group for bringing this to the nation's attention. I have had the opportunity to attend a showing, you might say, or

[40] Zappa, *Real Frank Zappa*, 263–75.
[41] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 0:01 to 2:48.

> presentation of this "porn rock," as they call it. . . . I would tell you it is outrageous filth, and we have got to do something about it. . . . I would make the exception that if I could find some way constitutionally to do away with it, I would.

Senator Hollings attacks the music in a way that clearly demonstrates his concerns for "the American public," and especially "the tender, young ears of America." As the youth of America are exposed to "porn rock" in their homes via the intrusive "broadcast airwaves," and because minors are legally not allowed to consume pornography, Hollings asks "the best of Constitutional minds" to concoct legal arguments for censoring "porn rock" that circumvent the free speech protections granted by the Constitution.[42]

Third to speak was Senator Paul S. Trible of Virginia who, after citing Plato as an expert of the effects of music on society, stressed that the hearings should not be about censorship but should encourage a society-wide moral accountability for our cultural production.

> Our culture powerfully affects individual character. When we are constantly confronted by that which is coarse, we become coarsened. Repeated exposure to song lyrics describing rape, incest, sexual violence, and perversion is like sandpaper to the soul. It rubs raw one's sensibilities, resulting in a state of emotional numbness. In the words of George Will, one becomes literally "de-moralized." . . .
>
> The mere announcement of this hearing led to cries of censorship. The issue before us, however, is not censorship. Censorship, according to the classic legal definition, is the review of publications for the purpose of prohibiting the publication, distribution, or production of material deemed objectionable as obscene, indecent, or immoral. The key word in that definition is prohibition.
>
> The issue before us is not prohibition, but rather the exercise of moral suasion, the labeling of offensive lyrics, and other efforts aimed at encouraging restraint regarding the time, place, and manner of certain speech in question. That does not constitute censorship.[43]

Trible, seemingly running in the same intellectual circles as Allan Bloom and the aforementioned George Will, hoped to convince the public and the artists themselves through well-constructed

[42] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," starting from 5:01.
[43] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 9:10.

moral argument that this music should be avoided and that musicians should self-censor. Fearing the type of moral relativism later critiqued by Bloom in 1987's *The Closing of the American Mind*, as well as the affective sway of music on human behavior, Trible focuses on the need to protect those most at risk for harm.[44]

> Now, the effects of such lyrics on a well-adjusted child may not be cataclysmic. Rather, the emotional damage is more subtle. The effect on a troubled child, however, can be disastrous, pushing that child over the emotional precipice. And to the extent that individual attitudes are influenced, this becomes a very real social problem.
>
> The linkage between experience, thought, and action necessarily leads to concern about the consequences for society, and it demands a response from each of us, not as self-appointed guardians of the national morality, as some would suggest, but as concerned citizens and leaders of a great and lasting republic.[45]

For Trible, Americans hold a responsibility to protect children from immorality, regardless of their level of vulnerability, in order to foster a moral society.[46] This notion of defending the emotionally troubled against metal music was brought to the fore of American consciousness in the mid-1980s and early-1990s in trials involving Ozzy Osbourne and Judas Priest brought by parents of children who attempted or committed suicide while purportedly listening to this music.[47]

From there attacks continued. Senator Al Gore, like Senator Danforth, stressed that this music went beyond normal rebelliousness into new modes of indecency.[48] Senator Paula Hawkins of Florida, chair of the Children, Family, Drugs and Alcoholism Subcommittee, provided select audiovisual examples for consideration. These included the album cover of

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[44] Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed American Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).
[45] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 9:10.
[46] Walser points out this fear of "'playing in the wrong mode,'" as per the music-rhetorical theories of Quintillian, in "influential condemnations of heavy metal." Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 137.
[47] See, for instance, Andy R. Brown, "Suicide Solutions." Kory Grow, "Judas Priest's Subliminal Message Trial: Rob Halford Looks Back," *Rolling Stone*, August 24, 2015, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/judas-priests-subliminal-message-trial-rob-halford-looks-back-57552/.
[48] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 13:42.

W.A.S.P.'s *Animal (Fuck Like a Beast)* and a portion of Van Halen's video for "Hot for Teacher" in which teachers become strippers (and which received a round of applause after its showing, prompting Gore to condemn "demonstrations of any kind"). She presented an excerpt from Twisted Sister's "We're Not Gonna Take It" that shows a child rebelling against his father's authority by playing electric guitar.[49] Susan Baker's testimony highlighted the desire of the Parents Music Resource Center, which was founded "by mothers of young children who are very concerned by the growing trend in music toward lyrics that are sexually explicit, excessively violent, or glorify the use of drugs and alcohol," to "educate and inform parents" about the "proliferation of songs glorifying rape, sadomasochism, incest, the occult, and suicide."[50] From these testimonies we gain a sense of the identities of these senators and advocates. They value moral purity and family-orientedness, and they wish to serve as protectors of those who, unadulterated by the filth of porn rock, are vulnerable to be morally influenced by the power of music.

These arguments, put forth by powerful members of American society, set the tone for any defense of metal in the late 1980s and early 1990s, academic or otherwise. By establishing "porn rock" music as noteworthy for its exceptional deviance from American values, these senators and the PMRC claimed moral capital as the opponents of music that degrades American morality. By largely avoiding requests for censorship in favor of ones for self-regulation within the record industry, the PMRC won a symbolic victory over this music through the creation of the Parental Advisory label without passing legislation or violating constitutional rights. It

[49] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 26:34. The irony of this song being used in Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign is not lost on me.
[50] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," 33:50.

became the responsibility of the defenders of metal to address one or all of the points raised by critics at the hearings.

Music Scholarship and the PMRC Hearings

The scholars of early metal studies joined the defense against the PMRC, arguing back against culturally conservative politicians and members of the academic community alike. In 1993, Walser produced an article titled "Professing Censorship: Academic Attacks on Heavy Metal," in which he creates a shortlist of the enemies of heavy metal that includes Tipper Gore, Professor Joe Stuessy, and Professor Carl A. Raschke. Though his work rarely avoids confrontational rhetoric, this article is particularly incendiary; Walser more than one time refers to the attacks of these "reactionary" forces as "terrorism."[51] To provide one example, Walser says that

> though the PMRC and Congress described the hearings as neutral "fact-finding," others saw them as terrorism, since Congressional interrogation of musicians and leaders of the music industry suggested implicit (and illegal) threats of legislation if the moralistic demands of the PMRC for "voluntary" censorship were not met.[52]

Walser makes clear that the members of this panel had explicit political aims and were circumventing normal legislative processes in order to enforce their moral preferences. By using their power to create boundaries separating porn rock from the undefined, morally acceptable music that most of the American public listened to, the senators on this panel took advantage of the climate of fear surrounding metal music in the 1980s.[53]

[51] Robert Walser, "Professing Censorship: Academic Attacks on Heavy Metal," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 5 (1993): 68–72.
[52] Walser, "Professing Censorship," 69.
[53] Andy R. Brown, "Suicide Solutions," 17.

Professor Joe Stuessy was present at the PMRC hearings, giving expert testimony as a professor of music at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Stuessy's stance toward metal was notable for being on the side of the conservative PMRC members, especially given his authorship of the textbook *Rock & Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development*, published five years later.[54] In the hearings Stuessy locates himself within the argument that derides metal music for transgressing acceptable boundaries of rebelliousness.

> Today's heavy metal music is categorically different from previous forms of popular music. It contains the element of hatred, a meanness of spirit. Its principal themes are, as you've already heard, extreme violence, extreme rebellion, substance abuse, sexual promiscuity and perversion, and Satanism. I know personally of no form of popular music before which has had as one of its central elements the element of hatred. . . . I hope that this committee will find a way to send a message to the industry: "clean up your act or we will do it for you."[55]

Weinstein, noting that Stuessy's association with the PMRC was tied to religion, points to his written testimony submitted to the Senate:

> Martin Luther said, "Music is one of the greatest gifts that God has given us; it is divine and therefore Satan is its enemy. For with its aid many dire temptations are overcome; the devil does not stay where music is." We can probably assume that Martin Luther was not familiar with Heavy Metal![56]

Thus, Stuessy is an academic who sought to argue, alongside cultural conservatives, that metal was bad for violating the moral standards of conservative Christian American society.

This argument for censorship was developed elsewhere in Stuessy's writings. Walser points to Stuessy's 1985, eighteen-page pamphlet "The Heavy Metal User's Manual" as a particularly influential source of information for the PMRC, and notes that it was cited by Tipper

[54] Joe Stuessy, *Rock & Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990).
[55] "Rock Lyrics Record Labeling," starting at 3:59:43.
[56] Testimony of D. Joe Stuessy, U.S. Congress, *Record Labeling* (Senate Hearing 99-529), 119. In Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 1–2.

Gore in her book *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society*.[57] Walser critiques the pamphlet, saying,

> Stuessy's status as a professor of music makes him a useful ally to those who would strip heavy metal of First Amendment protections as free artistic expression, for he is able to offer an aggressive twist on the usual mystification that elevates classical music and protects it from ideological critique, leaving popular musics more vulnerable to attack. Stuessy assures us that the process of artistic creation remains "shrouded in mystery," and the inspiration of composers like Beethoven was "mysterious and quite possibly divine"; but heavy metal, he asserts, is merely cranked out according to a formula, which disqualifies it from protection under freedom of expression, making it instead subject to "consumer protection" regulation like other manufactured products.[58]

Stuessy's argument against metal, which resembles Theodore Adorno's criticism of jazz music, stresses that metal lacks value because it can be reduced to formulas for capitalistic production and consumption.[59] Adornian critique has been used to devalue simple or commodified music in other stylistic realms; Robert Fink shows that scholars such as Wim Mertens, by drawing on Adorno and Marcuse, criticize minimalism and other "minimal" music, arguing that it has a "goalless," anti-teleological form that supports the capitalist agenda of pleasurable-yet-empty consumption.[60] Stuessy however moves beyond criticism into activism when he suggests that the commodified metal music be treated as a legal commodity so that it loses free-speech protections.

Interestingly, Walser did not write about how Stuessy's condemnation of metal was elsewhere further developed beyond the eighteen-page pamphlet.[61] In his textbook *Rock & Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development*, first published in 1990 and the product of "having taught a

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[57] Robert Walser, "Professing Censorship," 69; Tipper Gore, *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1987).
[58] Walser, "Professing Censorship," 70.
[59] On Adorno's writing on Jazz, see J. Bradford Robinson, "The Jazz Essays of Theodore Adorno: Some Thoughts on Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany," *Popular Music* 13 (January 1994): 1–25.
[60] Robert Fink, *Repeating Ourselves: American Minimal Music as Cultural Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 36–37.
[61] Walser, "Professing Censorship," 76.

course in rock music for over fifteen years," Stuessy writes a substantial amount about hard rock and heavy metal music, and often only thinly veils his general dislike for the music.[62] Even more directly, he includes a sub-section on heavy metal in the 1980s where he elaborates on his earlier statements from the PMRC hearings. With regard to heavy metal's development since the 1970s, he posits without evidence that the genre has remained musically stagnant for more than a decade.

> What have changed over the years are the lyrics and the extramusical factors (e.g., image and theatrics). The antihero mentality combined with the post-Alice Cooper shock trend have created an escalating situation in which each band must be louder, grosser, more rebellious, and more shocking than its predecessors.

This stance that the music has developed in its transgressiveness parallels his message in the PMRC hearings. After a long section about Van Halen that is largely positive, Stuessy turns to a section on "Other Groups," where he says

> because the shock factor has become an integral part of heavy metal, many of the bands have become increasingly overt in their references to sex and drugs and have dwelled on violence and extreme forms of rebellion. . . . A fascination with the occult and the macabre has led some to satanic themes (e.g. Venom, Mercyful Fate, Megadeth, and Metallica).

Metal for Stuessy is both morally unclean and musically unedifying. He sums this up clearly in his textbook when he posits that heavy metal

> may eventually run its course and lose its popularity for two reasons: (1) the numbing sameness of so many of the groups may begin to bore even the most rebellious teenyboppers; and (2) in their pell-mell race to out-shock and "out-heavy" one another, heavy-metal bands may finally reach the end of their own continuum and have nowhere else to go.[63]

By attacking metal, Stuessy draws symbolic boundaries not only between metal and moral behavior, but between metal and "inspired" music of composers like Beethoven. Metal has

[62] Stuessy, *Rock & Roll*, xi.
[63] Stuessy, *Rock & Roll*, 376–78.

nothing to offer the West in terms of culture or morality, and Stuessy predicted (admittedly accurately) it would largely fall out of popularity once it ran its course.

In his Chapter 15, "An Overview and an Editorial," Stuessy admits that though he sought to present his history text "as objectively as possible," he reserved this final chapter to present a "highly personalized" editorial full of his "subjective evaluations."[64] While the whole chapter is full of colorful examples of his conservative, Christian take on rock 'n' roll, two particular moments stand out. In the first, in a subsection labeled "Not all music is art: most of it is simply product," Stuessy launches into the type of grandiose historical manifesto that begins the average non-starter undergraduate music history term paper.

> In every century and in every musical style there have been a very few true artists and a large number of musical manufacturers. The former create art; the latter make products. In Mozart's time there were hundreds of hacks who understood the musical language of the time and went about producing compositions utilizing that language. . . . But only a handful of composers of that time had that something 'extra' that made their music rise above the level of product to the level of art. Several centuries later we have forgotten the hacks, but we still remember Mozart.
>
> Things are not much different now. Especially in a heavily commercialized industry such as rock music, one can be sure that works of *art* will be few and far between, whereas 95 percent of what we hear is mere *product*. . . . Fifty years from now (much less two hundred) 99 percent will be long gone; only a trace will remain.
>
> So beware when rock musicians attempt to hide behind "artistic freedom." In most cases they are merely successful manufacturers of a product. And as such they have the same responsibilities to society that manufacturers of automobiles, cigarettes, and lawnmowers have.
>
> But is not artistic freedom necessary for the creation of true art? Well, Bach worked from Sunday to Sunday for the church; he wrote many musical masterpieces within the strict confines of what was acceptable to his employer. Yet he still managed to create musical works that live three hundred years later. Was he "free" as an artist? Absolutely not. How far do you think he would have gotten if he had popped a few satanic messages or sexually explicit songs into the Sunday-morning church service?[65]

[64] Stuessy, *Rock & Roll*, 388.
[65] Stuessy, *Rock & Roll*, 391–92.

In the above passage we see a repeated praising of the Western art music canon (in a book about rock and roll), an elaboration on the Adornian "jazz-as-commodity" argument mentioned previously, an argument against First Amendment rights and artistic freedom, and one final jab at Satan and sexual explicitness as the potential ruiners of the legacy of J. S. Bach. All of these things, while here phrased abstractly in terms of what should be forgotten in rock history, are indirect attacks on recent (by scholarly standards) metal and other pop music targeted by the PMRC for censorship.

In another passage in his editorial, in a subsection labeled "How Much is too Much," Stuessy, essentially answers his own question.

> Prince tells us that incest is not so bad; Ozzy Osbourne suggests that "suicide is the only way out"; Twisted Sister says to "shoot 'em down with a fuckin' gun"; the Rolling Stones sing "feel the hot cum dripping on your thigh from it"; and Venom advises us to "plunge the dagger in her breast . . . sacrifice to Lucifer my Master." In concert, W.A.S.P. lead singer Blackie Lawless simulates intercourse using a buzz saw; Slayer simulates the cannibalization of women; Alice Cooper symbolically abuses a baby doll; satanic symbols adorn numerous stage settings. Album covers show meat hooks pressed into nude breasts, chewed-up body parts beneath the blood-drenched mouth of a rock star, and fantastic scenes representing hades. Videos revel in sadomasochism and violence. To paraphrase a popular commercial slogan, "We've come a long way, baby!"
>
> "All a matter of degree," you may say. Little by little, inch by inch, year by year, we have "progressed" from Elvis swiveling his hips, through Hendrix humping his guitar and Morrison exposing himself, to W.A.S.P simulating intercourse with a saw blade. Yes, it's just a matter of degree. But when does a difference of *degree* become a difference in kind? After all, 110 degrees Fahrenheit is simply a difference in degree from 15 degrees; but the former most of us think of as hot and the latter we call cold—opposites in fact. . . . Somewhere, at different degrees along the way, we become hot—we crossed a line.[66]

Here Stuessy targets metal music explicitly, alongside that of Prince and the Rolling Stones. To assert the same point we have seen several times from him so far: metal has transgressed normal rebelliousness into something unacceptable. In a moment remarkably similar to some in the

[66] Stuessy, *Rock & Roll*, 396–97.

PMRC hearings, Stuessy provides a laundry list of, to paraphrase Zappa, things certain Christians don't like.

In response to such attacks as Stuessy's, which were interwoven with those circulating amongst conservative Christian circles outside the academy, metal studies defended the metal community from attacks on its collective morality and its musical integrity. Weinstein showed though analysis that heavy metal lyrics were misrepresented in order to make them appear more morally transgressive than they actually were. She shows how Tipper Gore's *Raising PG Kids in an X-Rated Society* misinterpreted Ozzy Osbourne's song "Suicide Solution" (which Stuessy targets in his editorial section) as meaning "suicide is the solution," rather than being a reference to alcoholism and its deadly repercussions. AC/DC's "Shoot to Thrill" was represented as being about gun violence, when it was a coded reference to male orgasm reminiscent of many such devices in the blues and blues rock tradition.[67] While neither alcoholism nor male orgasms are PG content, they do not seem to be crossing an egregious boundary as Steussy argues.

Walser's third chapter, "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity," countered Stuessy's claim that metal was primarily "product" by showing how the music utilized elements drawn from "that assemblage of disparate musical styles known in the twentieth century as 'classical music.'"[68] He uses analysis to compare guitar solos by Ritchie Blackmore to the violin concerti of Vivaldi. Randy Rhoads solos over a "straightforward Vivaldian circle of fifths progression" in Ozzy Osbourne's "Mister Crowley." He points to Eddie Van Halen's solo showpiece "Eruption" quoting an excerpt from Rodolphe Kreutzer's second etude from his *Forty-two Etudes or Caprices*. He states in his introduction that the purpose of his comparative analyses of metal and classical music was not simply to make "a bid for academic legitimacy on

[67] Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 251–52.
[68] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 58–75.

behalf of the former" but was "to contribute to demystifying classical music's aura of transcendent autonomy and to debunking stereotypical notions of heavy metal's musical crudity." Walser established a line of argumentation that asserts metal's musical value in an effort to establish its musical seriousness. He compares this effort to the one that granted jazz's defenders "a certain amount of academic respectability."[69]

That the scholarship of metal studies was created in response to these hybrid political, scholarly, and public attacks on metal music granted it a relevance and cultural capital that influenced the structure of arguments in later academic work in metal studies. For Walser and Weinstein, defending metal was urgent. Successful defenses had uncontestable political ramifications. It was a pivotal moment for those who, like Sam Dunn in the introduction to this chapter, had been defending metal music for years. I will now turn to these two authors specifically to illustrate their importance in metal studies and to elaborate on the canon about which they wrote.

Weinstein, Walser, and the Early Canon

Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* and Deena Weinstein's *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture* are the dual foundational pillars of metal studies.[70] Weinstein and Walser's status in metal studies mirrors the status of Black Sabbath as the fabled founders of heavy metal music. While there may be other important scholarship, factors, or thoughts circulating before these two monographs, Walser and Weinstein's works function as the beginning of the field because they serve as the best starting

[69] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxv.
[70] See Walser, *Running with the Devil*, and Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Note that Weinstein's work was originally published with the title *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology*.

point for metal studies' disciplinary self-definition. They are the beginning not because of definitive chronological fact, but because an interpretive community, in the Stanley Fish sense, determines this to be correct.[71] Thus, to engage with Walser or Weinstein is to seek cultural capital in metal studies by targeting the foundational assumptions of the field for continuation or critique.

Weinstein and Walser's popularity in metal studies is unquestionable. They are frequently cited in contemporary metal studies scholarship. Both publish in edited collections on metal, often serving informally in the role of "distinguished guest."[72] Walser's *Running with the Devil* was republished in 2014 with a new introduction, demonstrating its pervasive influence. These two scholars have a presence outside of the academy due to their appearance on Sam Dunn's *Heavy Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*. Weinstein is targeted by Amanda Digioia and Lyndsay Helfric in an article that seeks paradigm and methodological shifts away from Weinstein's work; this shows her status in metal studies thought.[73] Walser and Weinstein function as the beginning of metal studies because the community says so—in a community where shared understandings of history matter—and because they are the beginning of the fan-produced, defenders-of-metal scholarship on the winning side of Brown's fault lines.

Walser and Weinstein share more than a concern for defending heavy metal from its detractors. They share bibliography: points of overlap include rock critic Lester Bangs, Christopher Small of "musicking" fame, and Dick Hebdige's foundational *Subculture: The*

[71] Stanley Fish, "Is There a Text in This Class," in *Is There a Text in This Class*, 303–21.
[72] See, for instance, Weinstein, "The Globalization of Metal"; Deena Weinstein, "Communities of Metal: Ideal, Diminished, and Imaginary," in *Heavy Metal Music and the Communal Experience*, 3–22; Deena Weinstein, "Reflections on Metal Studies," in *Global Metal Music and Culture*, 22–31; Walser, "Afterword," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 333–36.
[73] See Amanda Digioia and Lyndsay Helfrich, "'I'm Sorry, but It's True, You're Bringin' on the Heartache': The Antiquated Methodology of Deena Weinstein," *Metal Music Studies* 4 (2018): 365–74.

Meaning of Style.[74] They share discography too: this can be seen in Table 2.1 below, which I will explain in detail later. They worked in the academy at the same time, were aware of some of the same intellectual output, and heard much of the same music.

The primary differences between Walser's and Weinstein's views of metal, as they pertain to my theories about metal canon formation in the academy, stem from two things: first, the differing boundaries of their respective disciplines and the theoretical frames these disciplines employ, and second, their personal musical preferences. In response to perceived misinformation circulating about the genre, Weinstein aimed to present an objective, sociological understanding of heavy metal culture. She based her methodology in the traditions of Durkheim and Weber, the concept of bricolage from Lévi-Strauss, and the postmodern complexity of Lyotard.[75] She argued that "an objective inquiry can permit rational judgement about the merits of the proposals to limit the freedom of heavy metal's artists, audiences, and media."[76] In contrast to Weinstein's objectivity (real or imagined), Walser openly sided with heavy metal as a fan and practitioner, using "musical analysis, ethnography, and cultural criticism . . . to situate the texts and practices [he studies] within a forthrightly politicized context of cultural struggle over values, power, and legitimacy."[77] While Walser titled his book after Van Halen's "Running with the Devil," and analyzes Eddie Van Halen's playing as a prime example of the guitar virtuosity that is foundational to heavy metal, Weinstein groups Van Halen with bands like Ratt

[74] Both cite Bangs, "Bring Your Mother," and Hebdige, *Subculture*. Walser cites Christopher Small, *Music, Society, Education* (London: John Calder, 1980), and Weinstein cites Small's "Performance as Ritual: Sketch for an Enquiry into the True Nature of a Symphony Concert," in *Lost in Music: Culture, Style, and the Musical Event*, ed. Avron L. White (New York: Routledge, 1987), 6–32.
[75] Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 32 for Durkheim, 87 for Weber, 303 for Lévi-Strauss, and 304 for Lyotard.
[76] Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 3.
[77] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxiii.

and Poison in the "lite metal" category, one she points out is considered inauthentic by many fans.[78]

This first canon can be understood at a glance by reading Weinstein's "100 Definitive Metal Albums" and Walser's "Select Discography."[79] By viewing these two sections of the authors' works, we witness a breadth of metal style and material summarized by Weinstein with the term "bricolage," meaning a diversity of elements.[80] More importantly, we see their musical preferences. John McCombe shows that Weinstein questions the authenticity of what she calls lite metal—bands from the 1980s that emphasized catchy melodies and displayed feminine style by wearing makeup and the 1980s "big hair" look—because they lacked "serious" subject matter and wore outfits that were more glamorous than the "street clothes" of the American blue-collar class.[81] Walser addresses his choice to emphasize what he calls "the popular" directly precisely because it allows for engagement with important debates in mainstream culture about morality and censorship. [82] Behind all the methodological rigor and impressive bibliography, Walser and Weinstein were behaving just like the fans they studied: they argued for their favorite bands on either side of a tangible stylistic divide known throughout the metal community. Walser for example points to one fan who calls this the "split between glam and speed metal," meaning between lite metal and thrash.[83] While there was overlap between Walser and Weinstein regarding which bands they considered clearly canonic, there was disagreement about which

[78] Robert Walser, "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity," in *Running with the Devil*, 67–75. Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 45–46. For more on Weinstein's anti-hair-metal bias, see McCombe, "Hair Metal and Authenticity," 320–27.
[79] Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 295. Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 213–15. Walser also includes two "Heavy Metal Canons" in his Appendix 1, 181–82, in the form of two lists of significant metal acts from the magazine *Hit Parader*.
[80] Weinstein, *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*, 5, for example.
[81] McCombe, "Hair Metal and Authenticity," 320. For more on big hair, see "Big Hair," Wikipedia, accessed March 9, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_hair.
[82] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxiii–xxiv. The passage I paraphrase here is provided in Chapter 1, p. 48.
[83] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 6.

bands should be discussed and which albums were the best representations of a particular group's output.

To demonstrate their differing preferences, I include below a select number of albums from both authors in a table. Table 2.1 presents four categories on a spectrum that starts on the left with less extreme bands to those on the right that are more extreme. The first column includes the melodic, major-mode-using hard rock and lite metal camp; the second, the minor-blues-oriented, classic "heavy" metal; the third, the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM) and thrash albums that were more intense than classic heavy metal in terms of tempo and performance grandiosity but not fully extreme in aesthetic; and the fourth, full-blown extreme metal with screamed vocals, incredibly fast tempos, and modes and manners of pitch organization that move far outside the diatonic and blues harmonies seen in non-extreme metal. The rows are organized starting first with albums Walser canonized, then those Walser and Weinstein both canonized, and then Weinstein alone; this shows the preferences of the authors shifting from the popular styles to extreme styles. I showed preference for albums by bands who were canonized by both authors and note that there are a few cases where they would choose the same band to canonize but disagreed on what album was most worth of inclusion. This table is ultimately a glimpse at a small portion of what the two authors thought readers should know; looking at the full lists give a richer and deeper context.

The three immediate takeaways from this table are as follows:

1. There is a shared canonization of many of the same bands in the classic, lite, and NWOBHM/Thrash categories, and a significant overlap on specific albums.
2. Weinstein canonizes many extreme bands while Walser does not.[84]

[84] I have included the full extent of Walser's mentioned extreme metal bands. He almost entirely ignored extreme metal bands. I also note Weinstein's inclusion of extreme albums from the late 1990s as part of her revisions for republication in 2000; it would be fascinating work to research further whether these were added as a result of reflecting on the progress of metal studies in the extreme direction.

3. Walser canonizes far more classic and lite metal bands than Weinstein.[85]

While disparities would be expected, the second and third takeaways indicate a divide between fans of the "lighter" forms of metal and those that favored the more extreme forms. While it is clear there is agreement about many bands in this early canon, it is noteworthy how Weinstein and Walser disproportionately emphasize the musical styles that they prefer and that help to bolster their arguments.

However, simply stating that Walser and Weinstein had different musical preferences does not capture the true breadth of these musical differences. This must come from engagement with the music itself. Next I will analyze examples of metal music from these four categories to illustrate the stylistic poles that Walser and Weinstein were promoting and to serve as a starting point for those unfamiliar with the varieties of metal music.

[85] There are far more lite metal bands in Walser's discography than presented here. It would take entirely too much space to document them all here.

Table 2.1: Selected Works from Walser and Weinstein's Canonic Lists

Author(s)	Lite Metal/Hard Rock	Classic "Heavy" Metal	NWOBHM and Thrash	Extreme
Walser	Aerosmith, *Rocks* (1976) Bon Jovi, *Slippery When Wet* (1986) Def Leppard, *Pyromania* (1983) Poison, *Look What the Cat Dragged In* (1986) Twisted Sister, *Under the Blade* (1982) Van Halen, *Van Halen* (1978) Yngwie J. Malmsteen's Rising Force, *Yngwie J. Malmsteen's Rising Force* (1984)	The Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Are You Experienced?* (1967) Kiss, *Alive* (1975) Led Zeppelin, *ZOSO [IV]* (1971) Ted Nugent, *Great Gonzos: The Best of Ted Nugent* (1981)	Anthrax, *State of Euphoria* (1988) Motörhead, *No Sleep at All* (1988) Slayer, *South of Heaven* (1988)	Possessed, *Beyond the Gates* (1986)
Weinstein and Walser	Guns N' Roses, *Appetite for Destruction* (1987) Mötley Crüe, *Shout at the Devil* (1983) Ozzy Osbourne, *Blizzard of Ozz* (1980)	AC/DC, *Back in Black* (1980) Black Sabbath, *Paranoid* (1970) Deep Purple, *Machine Head* (1972) Judas Priest, *Stained Class* (1978)	Iron Maiden, *The Number of the Beast* (1982) Megadeth, *Peace Sells . . . But Who's Buying? (1986)* Metallica, *Kill Em' All* (1983)	Celtic Frost, *Into the Pandemonium* (1987)
Weinstein	Yngwie J. Malmsteen's Rising Force, *Marching Out* (1985)	Ted Nugent, *Double Live Gonzo* (1978) Thin Lizzy, *Jail Break* (1976) UFO, *Strangers in the Night* (1979)	Anthrax, *Spreading the Disease* (1985) Motör Head, *Ace of Spades* (1980) Saxon, *Wheels of Steel* (1980) Slayer, *Reign in Blood* (1986) Tygers of Pan Tang, *Crazy Nights* (1981)	Bathory, *Under the Sign of the Black Mark* (1987) Cannibal Corpse, *Butchered at Birth* (1991) Cradle of Filth, *Cruelty and the Beast* (1998) Deicide, *When Satan Lives* (1998) Dimmu Borgir, *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant (1997)* Napalm Death, *Fear, Emptiness, Despair* (1994) Obituary, *The End Complete* (1992) Possessed, *Seven Churches* (1985) Venom, *Black Metal* (1982)

Making Sense of Chaos: Metal Music Analysis

Method

To say that the music of heavy metal is important for understanding heavy metal is a truism. Yet analysis of heavy metal music tends to be less common than other approaches to the study of the music and its culture. This should not be unexpected. Most disciplines do not analyze music in the manner musicologists do. Because metal studies is an interdisciplinary field, most of its arguments do not rely on the reader's ability to analyze music. Using musical analysis to win scholarly arguments in metal studies is a more difficult and less direct path than others.

Despite this, I will dedicate time to analyzing the music of this canon for two reasons. First, it is worth talking about the music in detail to demonstrate why and how the breadth of styles that exist in heavy metal can be delineated to a certain extent by the presence or absence of particular musical features and the qualities of those features. Those who are unfamiliar with the musical variety of metal will gain some sense for this breadth and the boundaries between metal styles. Those in metal studies who have "forgotten" that metal encompasses more than just extreme metal will be reminded that their work describes only a small portion of metal. As I state in Chapter 1, metal studies would benefit from a more inclusive canon because it would both create a wider audience and avoid the pitfalls of ivory tower myopia. This analysis is my contribution to that effort.

Second, while the music can be largely ignored in the context of certain scholarly arguments, it is central to fans' experiences of the music. This includes scholars in metal studies. Walser says

> I have tried to pay particular attention to the *music* of heavy metal, in ways that are both textually specific and culturally grounded. For like most musicians and fans, I respond

> more intensely to music than to words or pictures. Before I knew any lyrics, before I had even seen any of the major performers, I was attracted to heavy metal by specifically musical factors. Within the context of the other kinds of music I knew, I found the "language" of heavy metal—the coherent body of musical signs and conventions that distinguished it as a genre—powerful and persuasive. Much of [*Running with the Devil*] will be concerned with what has been conspicuously absent from discussions of popular music, whether academic, journalistic, or moralistic: analysis of the specific musical choices embodied in individual songs and organized by genres.[86]

Metal studies scholars, as fans, choose music they find "powerful and persuasive" to argue for the validity of metal. This takes many forms. Walser's focus on popular metal was due in part to his "guitar-centric" tendencies and the prevalence of guitar solos and overt virtuosity in the music.[87] In his influential monograph *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge*, Keith Kahn-Harris highlights extreme metal's avant-gardism.

> In pushing conventional musical aesthetics to the point where music collapses into what is conventionally classed as noise, extreme metal challenges notions of what music is. Extreme metal musicians have pioneered sounds that can be heard nowhere else and developed new musical fusions that challenge accepted musical boundaries.

Though different fans of metal will find different things to like about the music, they generally write about music that they engage with and appreciate. Kahn-Harris says that the music of extreme metal "has always entranced [him]."[88] This means that metal studies canons, while designed to win arguments, are still largely representative of the musical preferences of those who have the power within the discipline to establish the canon and the boundaries of participation in metal studies.

[86] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxiv.
[87] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 173.
[88] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 5–6.

To show the breadth of the early canon, I chose representative songs from the four categories outlined in Table 2.1 above:

- AC/CD's "Back in Black" from the Classic "Heavy" Metal category;
- Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" from Lite Metal/Hard Rock;
- Slayer's "Angel of Death" from NWOBHM and Thrash; and
- Cannibal Corpse's "Butchered at Birth" from Extreme Metal.

In order to best communicate the stylistic breadth among the various examples, my analysis is organized by several broad categories that I feel best indicate what Walser called "the coherent body of musical signs and conventions": overdrive, vocals, tonal/modal/chromatic pitch organization, effects, and drumming technique.[89] Whereas scholars and conservative critics alike tend to focus on the culture, lyrics, and imagery of metal in their analysis of the music, it is these musical categories that sonically signify to fans what style of music is being played.

Through comparative analysis, I seek to outline between these examples what I will call the musical boundaries, or the symbolic differences between these musics known within the metal community to demarcate between subgenres or sub-subgenres. These musical boundaries become the basis for understanding the symbolic boundaries within the metal community. They will also become the basis for questioning these boundaries, as there are many notable exceptions to these rules even within this small group. My primary focus will be on the songs named above, though I will mention others as needed to paint the clearest picture possible.

Categories of Analysis

The following categories of analysis can be used to understand—in a basic sense and certainly with the sorts of caveats that exist in any effort to positively codify complex human

[89] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxiv.

behaviors—the musical differences between styles of metal that exist in the early metal music studies canon. I have chosen them in an effort to speed readers toward the understanding gained from years of dedicated listening to metal music and participation in spaces where metal knowledge circulates. While understanding these categories cannot completely replace insider knowledge, they will grant listeners tools for the sort of critical listening needed to evaluate the music of these canons and how the canons in the following two chapters came to reflect a narrow stylistic stream of metal music. I will also use these categories in later chapters where musical analysis occurs.

The first category of analysis is **overdrive**. As it pertains to sound amplification, the most basic way of understanding overdrive is to imagine a signal chain that includes a guitar, an amplifier, and a speaker. When the guitar is strummed, it produces an electrical signal that is sent via cable to an amplifier. The amplifier takes the signal, makes it stronger, and sends the signal to a speaker to create sound. Depending on the quality of the parts used in the amplifier and the speaker, this signal can be produced faithfully, or "cleanly," up to a certain volume. When the capacity of the amp and speaker to produce clean sound is exceeded, distortion of the original signal occurs.[90] Turning the amplifier past the point of clean sound production overdrives the amp, and thus "overdrive" is a term used to denote the kind of distortion produced by pushing an amplifier past its normal operating limits.

The simple definition given above has been complicated by technological advances in the electric guitar world. While in the early days of guitar amplification one had to turn guitar amps up to high volumes to achieve an overdriven sound, now there exist foot pedals like the Ibanez Tube Screamer with circuits that mimic the overdriven sound of a powerful amplifier at

[90] See also Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 41–44.

reasonable volume levels. Present-day guitarists tend to find overdrive to be a mild form of distortion in comparison to "distortion" proper, which is achieved in modern guitar amplifiers that are capable of distorting the original signal in a pre-amplifier circuit that is then sent to the amplifier circuit to be made louder.[91] Thus guitarists tend to recognize the sonic character of different amp distortions based on the sound of its "preamp" circuit, and the foot pedals mentioned above also function as preamps in that they shape and distort sounds that will later be amplified.

Though Robert Walser, for instance, uses the term "overdrive" literally in the context of describing Eddie Van Halen's method of modifying his amplifiers to send more power than normal to overdrive the sound, the term is used metaphorically throughout metal studies to describe aesthetics that exceed the norm in terms of their energy.[92] Walser himself expands overdrive and distortion by applying the terms to his discussion of how metal vocals exude power and energy. Kahn-Harris extends this application to extreme metal vocals, which for him are overdriven to the point of pitchless distortion, mimicking the progression from overdrive to distortion in guitar terminology.[93] Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene use overdrive to encapsulate metal's entire affect, coining the term "affective overdrive" to include

> the distinctive timbre of the heavily distorted electric guitar; either soary or raspy and unpitched vocals (including shouting, shrieking, and growling); prominent use of a Western drum set, often with a heavy emphasis on double-bass drums; and energetic and prominent guitar figuration, in the form of the virtuosic melodic expression of classic heavy metal guitar solos or the fast-paced riffs of thrash metal.[94]

[91] For an explanation of how distortion occurs in terms that guitarists use, see "Overdrive vs Distortion vs Fuzz: What's The Difference?," YouTube video, uploaded by CSGuitars, Oct 31, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yj53Q-pisbw.
[92] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 41–45.
[93] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 32.
[94] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 10–11. For a description of "double-bass drums," see the discussion below of drumming as an effect.

Though I give credit to Wallach, Berger, and Green for creating the best theory of metal music aesthetics I have encountered, I will narrow my use of the term to only include those elements of music that have a sound that results from overdriving a signal. So vocals are overdriven not simply because a singer brings a level of intensity not found in other forms of music, but because the sound itself is the result of the distortion caused by overdriving a signal. An example of an overdriven vocal then would be the scream at the beginning of the Beatles "Revolution," though it may lack the "affective overdrive" of some metal screams.

Generally speaking, the styles of metal on the left of Table 2.1 have guitar sounds with less overdrive than those on the right. While the overdrive used in metal music tends to be far above other styles of music, there is a noticeable difference in the amount of overdrive used by bands like Deep Purple or Twisted Sister (to the left) when compared with Metallica or Morbid Angel (to the right). This can be explained to a certain extent by continued developments in guitar amplification technology: Deep Purple's *Machine Head* (1972) came significantly before Morbid Angel's *Altars of Madness* (1989). But Twisted Sister's *Under the Blade* (1982) and Metallica's *Kill 'Em All* (1983) are chronologically close, indicating that differing levels of overdrive is often a stylistic choice rather than an inevitability based on available technology.

The second category, and perhaps the clearest demarcation between extreme and non-extreme for the metal neophyte, is **vocal style**. Fenriz, member of the legendary black metal band Darkthrone, says "One of the main lines from extreme metal and just traditional metal, or regular metal, is actually when you go from 'ahh' [sung] to 'AHHH' [screams]."[95] Yet his reductionist take is not indicative of the myriad kinds of screams in extreme metal music. As a starting point in the scholarly literature, Keith Kahn-Harris distinguishes between black metal screams and

[95] Sam Dunn and Scot McFayden, "Metal Evolution—Extreme Metal | FULL EPISODE," YouTube video, uploaded by BANGERTV – All Metal, January 7, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoHOgfEoTlc.

death metal growls.[96] Black metal screams, best understood by listening to examples like Darkthrone's album *A Blaze in the Northern Sky,* are higher pitched screams that are often raspy and washed in reverb to give a haunting, demonic feeling akin to being in a satanic cathedral or magical pagan wilderness.[97] Death metal growls are lower pitched, Cookie-Monster-sounding vocals, an example of which is Cannibal Corpse's "Hammer Smashed Face."[98] While this distinction explains a great deal of vocal technique used in extreme metal in the 1980s and 1990s, there has been an expansion in screaming technique that merits further explanation.

Legendary metal vocal coach Melissa Cross provides a different, but overlapping, manner of grouping screams than Kahn-Harris, based on the vocal techniques required to create them.[99] These techniques are

1. The fry scream, exemplified by Anders Friedman's vocals on "My Sweet Shadow" by the band In Flames.
2. The false chord scream, heard in Corey Taylor's vocals on "Spit It Out" by Slipknot.
3. The death scream, which Angela Gossow uses in her vocals for Arch Enemy's "My Apocalypse" (and Frank Oz used to voice Cookie Monster).
4. The hybrid scream, used by Rodger Daltrey on "Love, Rain O'er Me" by the Who. Note this is not extreme music, or even metal at all.

There are even more extreme metal techniques than those listed above. To provide just two examples: deathcore, a subgenre that combines death metal with hardcore punk, makes use of "pig screams" and "gutturals"; an example of the former can be heard three minutes and twenty-three seconds into Whitechapel's "Prostatic Fluid Asphyxiation," and the latter fifty-four seconds

[96] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 32.
[97] See Darkthrone's *A Blaze in the Northern Sky* for an example of black metal screaming, "DARKTHRONE A Blaze in the Northern Sky Full-length 1992," YouTube video, uploaded by Extreme Metal Music Full Discography, December 10, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDi99nXhObs, 1:40.
[98] "Cannibal Corpse – Hammer Smashed Face," YouTube video, uploaded by HarDcorXtreme, February 15, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNhN6lT-y5U, 0:24.
[99] "How to Scream Like a Rocker," YouTube video, uploaded by Wall Street Journal, May 24, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXNUSk-7BOk.

into the track.[100] All of these examples show the existence of a variety of techniques and manners of understanding screams in extreme metal music.

The third category is what **tonal, modal, and chromatic elements** are used in a particular piece.[101] Generally speaking, classic heavy metal and lite metal use major and minor modality, both with diatonic and blues scales. There are notable exceptions, like Black Sabbath's "Black Sabbath," which uses a G – G – C# tritone riff derived from the "Mars" movement of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*.[102] Extreme metal and thrash resist the major mode almost completely, use minor and Phrygian modes when using strict modes at all, and incorporate much more chromaticism into their riffs and guitar solos. Walser argues that modes imply "a set of functional syntactical relationships and affective potentials."

> Imagine (or play) the beginning riff of Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water" in its original blues Aeolian form (G-Bb-C, G-Bb-Db-C); now play it in major/Ionian (G-B-C, G-B-D-C)—it sounds like a Pat Boone cover; give it a Phrygian twist (G-Ab-D, G-Ab-Eb-D), and it sounds like Megadeth.[103]

Deep Purple, part of classic heavy metal, use the standard minor blues in their famous riff. To make it major makes the riff like the non-metal pop singer Pat Boone. And when using Phrygian, the music becomes the thrash metal of Megadeth. Walser's example supports my above generalizations, creating something of a spectrum with major on the popular end, aeolian blues in the middle, and Phrygian on the extreme end. These generalizations hold true in the examples I discuss below.

The fourth is the use of **effects**. A broad category of musical sounds, effects are pitch-, space-, or time-based alterations of sounds that can be used to create anything from simulating

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[100] "Whitechapel—Prostatic Fluid Asphyxiation (LYRIC VIDEO)," YouTube video, uploaded by Metal Blade Records, January 5, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuQnr2DdS6Q.
[101] For more on Mode and Harmony, see Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 46–48.
[102] See "How Heavy Metal was Born: The Riff of 'Black Sabbath,'" YouTube video, uploaded by Alberto Bernard, September 19, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqUidIQ9j8w.
[103] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 46–47.

natural sonic occurrences to creating supernatural new sounds. In live performance, these often take the form of effects pedals, digital audio workstation plugins, or electronics mounted on metal racks backstage that receive the foundational sound of the voice or instrument in question and alter it when the effect is triggered. In recording, effects are either applied to the "raw" recorded sound to give the recording engineer control over the level of effect applied, or are recorded as part of the "raw" sound (essentially matching live performance). Generally speaking, effects are thought of as existing outside the base sound in question and as being separate from overdrive, even though they can be produced in a similar manner by pressing a foot switch or turning on a plugin. This is perhaps related to this history of guitar playing, where overdrive has historically been created by turning up an amp, but effects belonged outside the amplification circuit.

The way that effects help delineate styles is not so simple as the other categories. To be as succinct as possible, the popular metal side of the spectrum is more likely than extreme metal to use noticeable effects. However, many classic heavy metal bands resist using effects—AC/DC's "Back in Black" serves as an example of this below. Contrastingly, the extreme subgenre of black metal is laden with effects used to create a sound that evokes ancient soundscapes and pagan, satanic, or spiritual associations. Other extreme metal subgenres use pitch-shifting technologies to make screamed vocals sound even shriller or more guttural. Examples of notable use of effects thus require more context and knowledge than other categories of analysis, even though they still possess great meaning for metal listeners. Ritchie Sambora's use of the talkbox effect on Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" or Jimi Hendrix's use of wah on "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" are equally significant in their signifying power to the reverb laden hellscape of black metal band Darkthrone's "Kathaarian Life Code." Though the

examples I have chosen to analyze for thrash and extreme metal largely lack conspicuous effects, this should not be taken as the norm for these subgenres.

I have included some common examples of effects in Table 2.2 for reference. I will outline some specific categories of effects below, but for readers looking for a solid grasp of effects, I recommend watching videos that explain guitar effects pedals on the internet. Or, better yet, I recommend acquiring the technology to implement effects on your preferred method of sound creation. It should be noted that many of these effects could be considered as part of two groups in certain cases. I do not mean for the table to be dogmatic so much as a practical way of grouping these effects for those with little phenomenological experience with them.

Table 2.2: Examples of Effects

	Pitch (frequency)	**Space**	**Time**
Effect Name	Vibrato, Chorus, Phaser, Flanger, Wah, Filters, Transposers	Stereo, Leslie Cabinet	Delay, Reverb

Pitch-based effects, which more accurately might be called frequency-based, are those that alter the frequencies of the sounds in question. For instance, filters and wah effects maintain the pitch of the original note but diminish or remove entirely certain sonic frequencies in order to alter the sound in dramatic ways. Some effects in this category, like transposers, literally alter the pitches to play a certain interval away from the fundamental note. Some alter the pitch slightly back and forth at a regular pace, creating what is called modulation; examples include vibrato, chorus, phaser, and flanger. Some famous examples in metal would be Jimi Hendrix's aforementioned use of wah on "Voodoo Child" and Eddie Van Halen's use of phaser in the finger-tapping portion of his virtuosic solo "Eruption."

Space-based effects are those that either literally change the way the sound is traveling through space or imitate this phenomenon electronically or digitally. An example of the former is a Leslie cabinet, which has a speaker on a rotor that spins inside a cabinet. This sound can be heard on John Lennon's vocals in the Beatles' "Tomorrow Never Knows." The sound has also been imitated electronically in uni-vibe pedals and digitally in plugins that simulate the Leslie effect. Stereo too can be used as a space-based effect when done with intention.

Time effects include delay and reverb. Delay is the replication of a sound at a particular interval after the original sound occurred. Whereas echo technology began in more limited fashion, either using tape or analog electronic components, with digital delay the replications can be varied in countless ways. Delayed sound can be repeated once or indefinitely, at the same or different volume than the original sound, and can replicate the original sound with a potentially different quality depending on the technology used or the settings available to alter the delayed sound. Albin Zak calls delay "echo," and rightly points out how echo is frequently used as a textural thickener by producing a lower volume, single echo almost immediately after the original sound (less than 25 milliseconds).[104] Zak also describes a technique called ADT, or automatic double tracking, where the volume of the single echo is set to match the original source in a way that simulates the effect of recording the same passage of music on two separate tracks.[105] Delay settings with longer intervals between the repetitions create more noticeable effects; the introduction to "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns N' Roses uses a longer delay to turn a triplet pattern into what sounds like an echo chamber of guitar triplets. Delayed sounds can be reversed, giving a similar effect to the reverse tape guitar solos in the Beatles' "Tomorrow

[104] Zak, *The Poetics of Rock*, 70.
[105] Zak, *The Poetics of Rock*, 71.

Never Knows." Delay is a versatile effect commonly applied to metal guitar solos to add either the textural thickness or ADT effects Zak outlines.

Reverb is particularly important in metal music. Short for reverberation, this term has a complicated, layered meaning due to the historical development of technologies meant to create the effect. Albin Zak, who calls the terms "ambience" and discusses it in the context of recording, defines the phenomenon as "the acoustic context of a sound." While sometimes this is the literal space the sound is produced in, Zak notes that the sound of spaces can be altered by mediating factors like microphone placement and damping. He further notes that, with technological developments such as echo chambers and steel plate reverb machines, these spaces can be simulated. Ultimately, digital reverb technologies have allowed for "an unprecedented array of possible ambient configurations."[106] The development of digital reverb moved the concept from one primarily about the recreation of spaces to one in which reverb is a creative tool that starts with the recreation of space but that can be extended, pitch modulated, and reversed to create effects musicians label with terms like "shimmer" and "ethereal."[107]

The correct use of reverb is indispensable for the creation of the affective overdrive theorized by Wallach, Berger, and Greene. Reverb can simulate the experience of hearing guitar and drums in an arena, can give the sense of performing in a large medieval church, or can take a scream from a human cry to a demonic wail in a boundless void. In a style of music focused on delivering heightened aesthetic experiences, reverb may be second in importance only to overdrive itself in signifying metalness.

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[106] Zak, *The Poetics of Rock*, 76–77.

[107] These terms are even applied to mass-produced consumer electronics that create reverb effects; see the TC Electronic Fluorescence Shimmer Reverb Pedal (https://www.tcelectronic.com/product.html?modelCode=P0CQ5) and the Wampler Ethereal Delay/Reverb Pedal (https://www.wamplerpedals.com/products/delay-reverb/ethereal-reverb-and-delay/).

The fifth category is **drumming technique**. Metal music applies a wide variety of drumming techniques. These techniques range from the sparse "kick-snare-kick-snare" pattern found in AC/DC's "Back in Black" to the rapid "blast beat" patterns found in grindcore that require not only tremendous stamina to play but also special "double-bass" kick drum set-ups meant to conserve energy and facilitate rapidity by using two kick pedals rather than one. Drum technique is, along with screamed vocals, one of the immediate signifiers of extreme metal. An example of blast beats can be heard one minute and twenty seconds into Napalm Death's "Scum," though the technique of using two bass drum pedals has become somewhat ubiquitous in modern metal. Lamb of God's "Walk with Me in Hell" is a strong example of the frequent and creative use of rapid kick drum patterns in extreme metal music.

"Back in Black"

"Back in Black," from the 1980 album of the same name, was AC/DC's return to recording following the death of lead singer Bon Scott earlier the same year. With the newly recruited Brian Johnson on lead vocals, AC/DC entered the studio with legendary producer Mutt Lange, who also produced their previous album *Highway to Hell*. The album is a monumental success, having sold 25 million certified units in the United States to date.[108] The title track is used in movies including *Iron Man* starring Robert Downey Jr., which is notable given that "Iron Man" is a canonic metal song by Black Sabbath (and is also used in the movie). In the way that Motown was "crossover" music—music created by black people that was embraced by both

[108] "Back in Black" searched at RIAA Gold and Platinum, accessed 7/10/2022, https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&se=back+in+black#search_section.

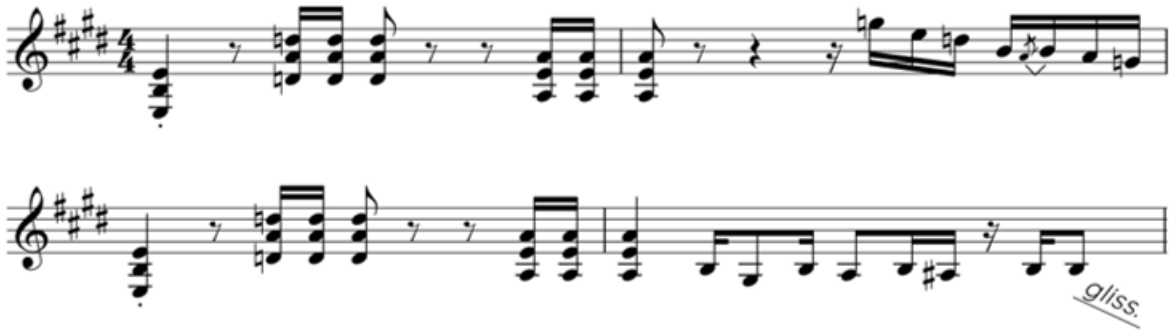
black and white people—"Back in Black" is a crossover metal hit that is loved by the non-metal community.[109]

"Back in Black" rather straightforwardly represents the blues-inspired, non-extreme variant of metal that many people would simply label "hard rock." Though this representation could be more the result of the song's ability to define stylistic normality due to its overwhelming popularity rather than the music possessing a sufficient number of salient traits, "Back in Black" is nonetheless a fitting choice to represent the classic heavy metal style. The song begins simply, marking 4/4 time at around 90 beats per minute (bpm) with high-hat cymbal hits and muted-string guitar strums. The tonality or modality of "Back in Black" is elusive: it primarily uses E-minor blues modality, though it at times seems to meander into diatonic E minor, E major, and D major. This is most likely due to the song being idiomatic to the guitar, rather than composed based in Classical music theory. "Back in Black" takes commonly played, "beginner" guitar chords such as E, A, D, G, B in their "power chord" form, meaning they lack a triadic third that defines clearly whether they are major or minor. It plays these basic chords in a way that reflects exploring what sounds good together, rather than what makes sense according to any prescribed musical forms. As power chords do not clearly define modality and tonality like triadic chords, they possess an ambiguity unavailable to major and minor chords that facilitates the avoidance of "wrong chords" resulting from playing incorrect pitches in particular keys. Yet the simplicity of power chords in terms of pitch is not matched by their sonic result given the presence of overdrive; Walser says power chords create "a complex sound, made up of

[109] On Motown as "crossover" see, for instance, Jon Fitzgerald, "Motown Crossover Hits 1963–1966 and the Creative Process," *Popular Music* 14, (1995): 1–11.

resultant tones and overtones, constantly renewed and energized by feedback."[110] Given power chords lack a third, they are notated with a "5" after the chord in superscript.

After the first two bars, as shown in Example 2.1, the guitars play a three-chord, E^5-D^5-A^5 riff that is ornamented by two alternating melodic responses to the chords.

Example 2.1: "Back in Black" Riff

The chords are all first-position power chords, meaning they utilize the open E, D, and A strings with a fifth and octave played on the two next-highest-pitched strings. The first melodic response is a descending blues scale with a quick bend thrown in for variety. The second response is a syncopated melodic figure that features an ascending ♯3, 4, ♯4, 5 line, bringing in elements of E major alongside the E-minor blues. This riff is used repeatedly in each chorus and the guitar solo section with little variation.

The chorus, marked each time the lead singer Brian Johnson shouts "cause I'm back," throws in some B^5 and G^5 chords for good measure and eliminates any ornamental lead guitar playing. At the climax of the chorus, Brian Johnson twice says "I'm back in black," with the guitars playing something of a plagal cadence on D major: on the first instance of "back in black" a G^5 is played for four beats until the second "back in black" is sang, with each word punctuated by simultaneous D^5 strums. Though I have no evidence of intention, this cadence

[110] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 2.

seems significant. The phrase "back in black" is a reference to mourning recently deceased singer Bon Scott.[111] Having a cadence associated with the "amen" of church music play over the titular lyrics adds to the gravitas of the moment.

The remaining material does not diverge far from what is seen in the verse and chorus. The bridge is built on E^5 and A^5 chords that features a more ornate version of the second melodic response from the verse. The solo sections feature an E-minor scalar descent of ♭1-♭7-♭6-♭5 over an E pedal that underpins lead guitarist Angus Young's classic blues rock soloing replete with bent notes and virtuosic runs. Nothing about the tonality or modality of the song is unexpected; it is the combination of common elements into something extraordinary that makes "Black in Black" successful.

The sound of "Back in Black" is not extreme. The overdrive on the guitars is the result of turning a Marshall 100-watt amplifier to full volume without adding any preamp gain and playing a Gibson SG with two-coil "humbucker" pickups that send more signal than a single-coil-pickup guitar like a Fender Stratocaster.[112] As described above, this overdrive is the result of a guitar and amp signal that is exceeding the ability of the speakers to produce clean sound. Tony Platt, the recording engineer for "Back in Black," says that

> if you want to get the right crunch, you need to have the lower specification speakers because you want the speaker to overload and not the amp. There's a substantial difference between overdrive on an amp and overdrive on a speaker.[113]

[111] Paul Elliot, "The Inside Story of AC/DC's Back in Black, the Biggest-selling Rock Album of All Time," *Total Guitar*, July 23, 2020, https://www.guitarworld.com/features/the-inside-story-of-acdcs-back-in-black.
[112] Steven Rosen, "AC/DC's Angus Young: 'I Liked the SGs Because They Were Light. I Tried Fenders but They Were Too Heavy and They Just Didn't Have the Balls,'" *Guitar World*, March 30, 2022, originally published March 1984, https://www.guitarworld.com/features/acdc-angus-young-sg-fender-1984.
[113] Andy Jones, "Tony Platt Shares the Secret to Angus Young's 'Back in Black' Tone," *Reverb*, June 6, 2017, https://reverb.com/news/tony-platt-shares-secret-angus-young-back-in-black-tone.

While in most applications you would want speakers whose specs can handle the signal the system is creating, Platt intentionally chose the wrong specs when creating guitar sounds for studio recording.

Brian Johnson's vocals, though largely screamed, are done in his idiomatic style that bears no resemblance to the guttural vocals that signify extreme metal. There is a significant pitch presence, which lands them closer to Melissa Cross's "hybrid scream" style used in classic rock. The drumming keeps straightforward time with a kick drum strike on beats one and three, snare hits on two and four, and eighth-note high hat keeping the pulse. There are no noticeable effects on the track; Platt says that "AC/DC don't like using effects."[114] The reverb is that of a recording room; it is not used for increased affect either across the band as a whole or for brief moments on certain tracks to extend a note or add emphasis. The track is a summation of AC/DC's straightforward, no-frills approach to blues-oriented heavy metal.

"Crazy Train"

Ozzy Osbourne's 1980 solo debut, *Blizzard of Oz*, marked his departure from the metal titans Black Sabbath. The album, which at present is certified five-times platinum, continued Ozzy's musical success, leading to a solo career that has spanned more than four decades and extended into a popular reality television show featuring his family titled *The Osbournes*.[115] The first single on *Blizzard of Oz*, "Crazy Train," served as an introduction not only to solo Ozzy but to his young and relatively unknown guitarist Randy Rhoads, whose classically-inspired virtuosity launched him into stardom only two years before he lost his life in a plane crash.[116]

[114] Jones, "Tony Platt Shares."
[115] "Blizzard of Oz," searched at RIAA Gold and Platinum, accessed 7/12/2022, https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&se=Blizzard+of+OZ#search_section.
[116] For more on Rhoads's classical influence, see Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 78–84.

In a manner similar to AC/DC's "Back in Black," though on a smaller scale, "Crazy Train" has crossed over into popular culture and gained broad cultural acceptance. The song is used in a 2012 Honda Pilot commercial, where a presumed family of eight sings the song a cappella while on a road trip.[117] Hip hop artists Trick Daddy and Lil Jon borrowed it in two forms in their 2004 gold-certified hit "Let's Go": they repurpose the introductory bassline using electronic instruments, and sample Ozzy's saying "Ai Ai Ai" and Rhoads scraping his strings with his pick.[118] Ozzy performed it at a New England Patriots football game in 2005 to celebrate the team's back-to-back Superbowl wins.[119] In none of these instances does "Crazy Train" seem out of place due to being transgressive or extreme. Rather, it evokes family bonding, hip hop energy, and celebratory exuberance in each of these settings, respectively.

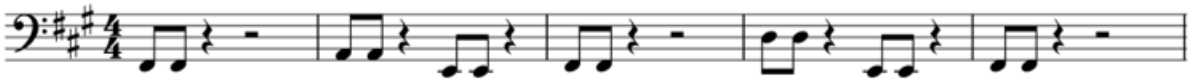
This popularity aligns with the musical style of "Crazy Train." The song is decidedly more upbeat than the traditional doomy, minor-bluesy Black Sabbath song, clocking in at around 140 beats per minute and spending its verses and guitar solo section in A major. When it is in F# minor, it features the aforementioned Lil-Jon-sampled bassline and the main guitar riff, a riff so studied you could safely bet money on walking into any Guitar Center in the United States and finding someone on staff who can play it. This song is basically a pop hit in a metal shell, a precursor to the lite metal hits of the late 1980s in its style and structure.

"Crazy Train" begins with the cry "All aboard!," an invitation to board Ozzy's train ride into madness. This cry, drenched in reverb, is followed by a long series of mad laughter. This is not just Ozzy laughing, but is an effect created by repeating (by means of delay) the reverb-rich

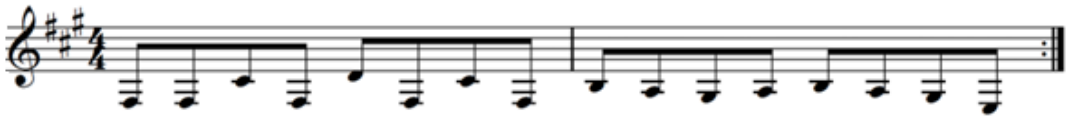
[117] "2012 Honda Pilot Commercial—Extended Version ft. Ozzy Osbourne's 'Crazy Train,'" YouTube video, uploaded by Jandro Meza, October 9, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTA2CE8_KLk.
[118] "Let's Go" searched at RIAA Gold and Platinum, accessed 7/10/2022, https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&se=let%27s+go#search_section.
[119] "OZZY OSBOURNE—"Crazy Train" at Patriots Opener 2005 (Live Video)," YouTube live video, uploaded by Ozzy Osbourne, September 8, 2005, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhv_ZSORL-c.

“ha ha ha” numerous times. This repetition of the laughter gives the beginning an unnatural feeling because it creates an acoustic space in which Ozzy’s scream feels like it is sounding someplace outside the natural world. To the listener this reverb and delay effect creates an uncanny environment that sets the stage for what is to come.

As the introduction continues, the drums click the starting tempo and the bass comes in playing an F#, A–E–F#, D–E–F# riff, shown in Example 2.2, that outlines the F# minor center of the introduction, bridge, and outro sections.

Example 2.2: “Crazy Train” Bass Line

During this time, more reverb heavy, delay echo effects are used on Ozzy’s voice saying the Lil-Jon-sampled “Ai Ai Ai” and on a vibraslap sound. This time the sounds are also repeatedly stereo-panned from left to right to further increase the sense of unease given by the “all aboard” cry. After this, the guitar performs a slow, distorted pick scrape to lead us into the main riff of the song.

The crazy train riff, seen in Example 2.3, stays in the F# minor tonal area of the introduction.

Example 2.3: “Crazy Train” Riff

This riff has an iconic status in metal music. It was the standout riff from Ozzy Osbourne's first single as a solo act.[120] It is learned by and performed by guitar students all over the world.[121] And, due to guitarist Randy Rhoads's tragic death in a plane crash at twenty-five years of age, the riff and song have taken on an increased importance in the metal community.[122] Yet it is only played twice in the song: once during the introduction and once after the solo section 3:12 into the song. The fact that it is so infrequently heard, in contrast to the riff on "Back in Black" for instance, demonstrates the outsized affective power it has in the minds of metal fans.

After the initial riff, the song turns to A major for the verse. The use of major is significant; since extreme metal rarely uses major, this signals to listeners that this section of the song more closely aligns with the lite metal category. And, as the song enters into the chorus, it flirts back and forth with the two relative major and minor tonal centers, between the darkness of the into and riff and the lightness of the verse, perhaps demonstrating the classical training that Rhoads underwent in his youth before taking up metal music.[123] This use of major and minor perhaps has contributed to the song's success; while never extreme, its contrasts invite fans of heavier music and fans of lighter music to each find something they like in the song.

The solo section is in F# minor. This is significant. Alan di Perna says

> Rhoads frequently shunned blues-based, African-American-derived pentatonics in favor of classical scales and modes, such as the natural minor (Aeolian) intervals heard in his solos for Ozzy's "Crazy Train" and "Believer."[124]

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[120] Chris Gill, "The Secrets Behind Randy Rhoads' Guitar Tone on Ozzy Osbourne's Crazy Train," *Guitar World*, November 19, 2021, https://www.guitarworld.com/features/randy-rhoads-crazy-train-tone-secrets.
[121] "Ozzy Doing CRAZY TRAIN with Very Young Japanese Guitarist Yuto Miyazawa," YouTube video, uploaded by JABProductions916, October 22, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1lG1y0R6sU.
[122] "Randy Rhoads: The 36th Annual Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony 2021," YouTube video, uploaded by Jukebox Heroes, December 23, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9L7ed9jkkS8.
[123] See for instance Alan di Perna, "Ozzy Osbourne: Crazy Train," *Guitar World*, March 5, 2008, https://www.guitarworld.com/features/ozzy-osbourne-crazy-train.
[124] di Perna, "Ozzy Osbourne: Crazy Train."

This departure from the minor blues scale into the minor mode marks a sonic shift to major and minor that would be the predominant sound of lite metal guitar solos of the 1980s. It creates a sonic difference from the blues-based solo heard on "Back in Black." However, metal had used minor mode on guitar solos in the past; see for instance Walser's analysis of Deep Purple's "Highway Star," where he notes that though guitarist Richie Blackmore "begins with blues-derived licks," he later brings "Baroque materials" into his solo.[125] This modal difference is not a matter of historical progression, but of a choice to draw inspiration from either the blues tradition, the classical tradition, or both.

The solo is also noted to have been triple-tracked, meaning it was recorded a first time, then rerecorded on a second and third track that play simultaneously with the first.[126] This increases the sonic impact of the solo in a similar way to how a chorus sounds more powerful than a solo singer. While there are now manners of creating this effect in digital audio workstations (DAWs) or with guitar pedals without a triplicate performance, the triple-tracking required that Rhoads be able to play the same solo identically multiple times in a row. This points to the fact that the solo was worked out in advance rather than improvised on the spot. As di Perna observes,

> for the most part, he broke with rock's long tradition of spontaneously improvised solos, a custom that stemmed from African-American musical forms like jazz and blues. Instead, Rhoads brought the rock guitar solo closer to the spirit of the classical cadenza—a set piece specifically designed to showcase technical virtuosity.[127]

Here we see a certain type of virtuosity on display, one that uses classical modes and precomposed music to show technical skill. Perhaps even more than the blues-style solos, Rhoads's style is the one that extreme metal reacts against in its search for musical transgression.

[125] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 64–65.
[126] di Perna, "Ozzy Osbourne: Crazy Train."
[127] di Perna, "Ozzy Osbourne: Crazy Train."

Rhoads's guitar set-up, despite playing in a lite metal band, pushes the overdriven sound of AC/DC a bit further. While he still utilizes humbucker pickups and a Marshall amplifier like AC/DC, he adds to this equation a bit of preamp gain and a MXR Distortion+ pedal as means to further increase the signal being sent to the speaker. Thus, Rhoads's guitar sound has even more distortion and sustain than that of AC/DC, despite being part of the lite metal style.[128] Still, it is significantly different from the more extreme guitar styles that utilize more of the preamp and are boosted by even more distorted pedals.

With its diatonic tonality, classically inspired solos, and use of effects to create musically interesting moments, "Crazy Train" fits among music of the lite metal style in terms of musical style. Recorded in 1980, it could be qualified as an early example; the metal bands of the middle and late 1980s that were the targets of the PMRC and Stuessy took many of the characteristics of "Crazy Train" and pushed them even further in the lite direction, emphasizing the major mode pop hooks, slick production value, and subject matter that was about sex rather than mental instability. But it is still far more lite in comparison to the underground albums like Metallica's *Kill 'em All* and Venom's *Black Metal*, and thus sits well in the category.

"Angel of Death"

Slayer's "Angel of Death," from the 1986 album *Reign in Blood*, is representative of the type of song that brought Slayer notoriety as one of the "Big Four" of thrash music: frenetic tempos, double-bass drumming one step away from blast beats, angry or violent lyrics delivered in a vocal style that is far more screamed than sung, heavily distorted guitars, riffs that use minor or Phrygian modes with chromatic alterations, and wild dueling guitar solos replete with

[128] Gill, "The Secrets Behind Randy Rhoads' Guitar Tone."

sixteenth-note shredding and squealing whammy-bar dives.[129] Many of these musical characteristics point to musical extremity, and indeed for some fans and commentators thrash counts as extreme metal. Thrash falls in something of a middle ground between the decidedly unextreme lite metal and the full-on death metal of bands like Cannibal Corpse, where the vocals have fully crossed the line into guttural screaming and the lyrical content is on the whole more violent and transgressive.

Reign in Blood marked a moment of sonic transition for Slayer as they moved record labels to work with Rick Rubin at Def Jam. Guitarist Kerry King said that working with Rubin changed the way that Slayer approached music making.

> It was a different mentality. Right away, the first thing you notice is that there's no reverb on [*Reign in Blood*]. That allows it to be way more threatening—it hits you in the forehead. Rubin really cleaned up our sound on that record, which drastically changed what we sounded like and how people perceived us. It was like, "Wow—you can hear everything, and those guys aren't just playing fast; those notes are on time." It was what we needed to be. Before that, we were happy to sound like Venom or Mercyful Fate. We played in Reverb Land, for lack of a better term. And the reverb was the first thing Rubin took out. When we heard the mix we were like, "Why didn't we think of that before?"[130]

It is true that there is not nearly as much reverb as there were on previous records; "Evil Has No Boundaries" from *Show No Mercy* sounds like it was recorded in a Tolkien-imagined dwarven hall. However, there is still reverb used on "Angel of Death" in particular moments, like Tom Araya's high-pitched scream that comes during the introduction at the eighteen-second mark. The only other distinct effect in the song is a filter-type effect, presumably a wah, that happens during the first guitar solo section in order to give the solo a bit more vocal character and to help it cut through the texture. The lack of reverb and other effects lends to the intensity of "Angel of

[129] A whammy bar is a bar attached to the bridge of the guitar that alters the pitch of all the strings by slackening or tightening them. A dive is when you press the bar in so far the pitch falls in a manner akin to the sound of a dive bomber. For what this looks like in a metal context, see "6 Slick Whammy Bar Tricks," YouTube video, uploaded by Music is Win, December 10, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyS4kCn7hIg.

[130] J. Bennett, "Who'll Stop the Reign?," in *Precious Metal: Decibel Presents the Stories behind 25 Extreme Metal Masterpieces*, ed. Albert Mudrian (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2009), 50.

Death": there are no smoothed edges or pleasant distractions, just four musicians playing relentless, technically demanding music.

Slayer's guitar sound is more overdriven than in AC/DC's and Ozzy Osbourne's songs, which is due to two primary factors. The first is the advances in Marshall amplifier technology during the 1970s that culminated in the famed JCM800 2203 used on the album.[131] The amp is notable for having separate volume knobs for the master and preamp, which allowed players to produce high levels of overdrive without needing to max out the volume or use signal boosting pedals.[132] The second factor is the use of guitars outfitted with Dimarzio Super Distortion pickups, which are designed to send more signal than traditional humbucker pickups to increase the natural overdrive of the guitar sound.[133] On top of this, Slayer detunes their guitars by a half step on every string, increasing the low frequencies in the song to grant more of what metal fans call "heaviness."[134] These things, in combination with the near omnipresence of Dave Lombardo's kick drum sixteenth notes, create a sound that is decidedly more extreme than found in traditional heavy metal and lite metal.

"Angel of Death" begins at a blistering 200 beats per minute (bpm). After a brief intro, the guitar riff enters, playing a sixteenth-note barrage on the open E string punctuated by F^5 chords on the "and" of beat four, establishing the Phrygian modality that pervades the song. The drums, playing steady sixteenth notes on high hat, transitions the sixteenth notes into the kick drum after a dramatic pick scrape while vocalist Tom Araya screams his reverb-laden scream.

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[131] Mixdown Staff, "Gear Rundown: Slayer's Reign In Blood," *Mixdown*, January 24, 2018, https://mixdownmag.com.au/features/gear-rundown-slayers-reign-in-blood/.
[132] Nick Bowcott, "The History of the Legendary Marshall JCM800 2203," April 15, 2020, https://www.sweetwater.com/insync/the-history-of-the-legendary-marshall-jcm800-2203/.
[133] "Gear Rundown: Slayer's Reign In Blood."
[134] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," 78.

The verse enters at thirty-nine seconds, with lyrics that are a clear departure from the previous two examples in transgressing societal norms. The song is about the atrocities committed during the holocaust by Nazi Dr. Josef Mengele. Its lyrics begin,

> Auschwitz, the meaning of pain
> The way that I want you to die
> Slow death, immense decay
> Showers that cleanse you of your life
>
> Forced in like cattle, you run
> Stripped of your life's worth
> Human mice, for the Angel of Death
> Four hundred thousand more to die

Where the previous two songs were about being a tough rock 'n' roll guy and having a hard time mentally, respectively, "Angel of Death" takes a marked departure from subject matter that might be considered countercultural into that which is reserved for the most serious history books. These lyrics are meant to shock and transgress in the same way the music is. Though I mention above that death metal lyrics are, on the whole, more shocking and violent than those of thrash metal, I would consider those in "Angel of Death" to be a notable exception to this norm.

After one minute and thirty-eight seconds of this introductory tempo, with drummer Dave Lombardo shifting through various beat patterns that largely maintain the initial sixteenth-note pulse, the drums drop out and the tempo backs off to 180 bpm while the guitars play a highly chromatic series of melodic riffs over down-strummed, palm-muted, open-string power chords in a manner that the metal community calls chugging.[135] Slayer maintain this tempo and feel for

[135] For further clarity on chugging, palm-muting is accomplished by placing the palm of the strumming hand lightly on the strings to dampen them and shorten their vibration time. On high-gain, down-strummed, open-string power chords, especially on the lowest string, this creates a sound that resembles the chugging noise of a steam train. See, for instance, "WILL IT CHUG?—FENDER BLUES JR," YouTube video, uploaded by Ola Englund, May 31, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7do_oC09yco&list=PLXMwtXJnJ93ge3F-ATMTn_wQQo1_f6opr&index=55.

around two minutes until the guitar solo sections, where the tempo moves to 225 bpm and then 240 before returning to the original 200-bpm section to close out the song.

The tempo and textural changes of "Angel of Death" organize the chaotic, blindingly fast, near-constant sixteenth notes that go from start to finish, and are what provide freshness and interest for listeners amid the near-constant intensity of the music. This is evinced by an analysis of "Angel of Death" offered by Emperor Rhombus in a *Metalsucks.net* editorial celebrating Slayer.

> Let us analyze the winning attributes of Slayer's most famous track, "Angel of Death." The song begins all BUNH! DUH NUH! before switching over to a diabolical BUNUH BA-DUUUH NUH! and then the band introduces the "AAAAAAAAAAAOOOOH!" If you find both of your hands making the horns at this point, don't worry, that's perfectly natural, as it's now time to dance as though you're trying to break every lamp in the house. Later, as that chugging Satan part happens, the listener lowers his or her head and bobs it tightly, preparing for the "FLYING FREEEEEE" that introduces the sound of two live horses being electrocuted. Then Dave Lombardo does the bumpablididididididididiDUMDUMDUMDUMDUMDUM. A final chorus, and you've successfully become the human equivalent of a working dryer full of hammers.[136]

Rhombus points to the "diabolical" guitar riff intro (BUNUH BA-DUUUH NUH!), Tom Araya's scream at the beginning ("AAAAAAAAAAAOOOOH!"), the 180-bpm middle section ("that chugging Satan part"), the lyrics "flying free" that lead to the 225-bpm and 240-bpm guitar solos ("live horses being electrocuted"), and Dave Lombardo's sixteenth-note kick drum feature after the solos ("bumpablididididididididiDUMDUMDUMDUMDUMDUM") that serves as the transition into the final chorus. The song is structured by this series of intense moments, and listeners orient themselves in their listening experiences by these musical landmarks.

[136] Emperor Rhombus, "Editorial: Listen to Slayer," *Metalsucks.net*, August 19, 2016, https://www.metalsucks.net/2016/08/19/editorial-listen-slayer/.

"Butchered at Birth"

Cannibal Corpse occupy a rare and important position in extreme metal: they have achieved a success and fame that, while far less than Ozzy Osbourne or AC/DC, is largely unmatched within the collection of underground subgenres. They have sold upwards of two-million albums.[137] They were the targets of then Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole for lyrics that "extoll the pleasure of raping, torturing, and mutilating women."[138] Indeed, Senator Dole may be primary reason for their success; critic Jonathan Gold argues that the band would not be culturally significant if Dole "hadn't blasted the group, among other entertainment entities, for 'undermining the character of the nation.'"[139] The band appeared in the Jim Carrey movie *Ace Ventura Pet Detective*¸ giving them debatably positive, mainstream exposure since they were not mocked or criticized in the film.[140] The current lead singer, George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher, is the inspiration for the fictional Nathan Explosion, lead singer of the band Dethklok from the cult classic cartoon show Metalocalypse.[141] Though from the perspective of those in the death metal underground there are any number of bands that are more influential or musically excellent, Cannibal Corpse's presence outside of death metal subculture make them an obvious choice for analysis.

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[137] "Cannibal Corpse Awarded with Plaque Signifying Sales of More than Two Million," *Ultimate Guitar*, February 12, 2015, https://www.ultimate-guitar.com/news/general_music_news/cannibal_corpse_awarded_with_plaque_signifying_sales_of_more_than_two_million.html.
[138] "Bob Dole Accuses Cannibal Corpse, Geto Boys and 2 Live Crew of Glorifying Sexual Violence," YouTube video, uploaded by Heavy Metal Picker, December 5, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdqHy9BCLKA.
[139] Jonathan Gold, "Gross Profit: When Sen. Dole Targets Certain Rock Groups, He Just Feeds their Notoriety," *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 1995, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1995-06-25-tm-16759-story.html.
[140] J. Bennett, "We Interviewed Cannibal Corpse About That One Time They Were in 'Ace Ventura: Pet Detective,'" *Vice*, February 10, 2015, https://www.vice.com/en/article/6vggk8/we-interviewed-cannibal-corpse-about-that-one-time-they-were-in-ace-ventura-pet-detective.
[141] Paul Travers, "George 'Corpsegrinder' Fisher: 'We Pick on Everyone . . . There's Some Sensitive F*ing People Out There and It Seems to Be Getting Worse," *Kerrang*, April 16, 2021, https://www.kerrang.com/cannibal-corpses-george-fisher-were-mean-to-everybody-we-pick-on-everyone-theres-just-some-sensitive-f-cking-people-out-there-and-it-seems-to-be-getting-worse.

While Senator Dole's criticisms of Cannibal Corpse may have had an unintended and ironically positive effect on the band's cultural presence, they are not completely misleading (unlike those the PMRC had for Twisted Sister and AC/DC). Cannibal Corpse specialize in lyrics that focus on a number of overlapping topics including gore, bodily fluids, sex, and violence, and they are all designed to be intentionally shocking. The song "Butchered at Birth" is replete with lyrics like "my knife cutting holes, fucking her remains." I will make no effort to defend the lyrics of Cannibal Corpse—I personally find them distasteful. However, the obviousness of the offensiveness has become for rock critics and metal defenders alike an explanation for the lyrics that is akin to the camp aesthetic; the appeal is that it is trying to be offensive. Gold calls the music "Grossout Metal," and elaborates by saying

> the point of Grossout Metal, is, you know, to be gross. I went to see Cannibal Corpse play at the Troubadour a couple of years ago, and what stuck out about the sparsely attended show, besides the fact that the only female in the club was hiding behind the cigarette machine, was that pretty much everyone was giggling.[142]

Gold points out the show's audience comprised (surprise . . .) immature men who seek entertainment in the equivalent of "the dead-baby jokes that hormonally challenged 14-year-olds used to tell each other in the '60s."[143] To Dole's criticisms of Cannibal Corpse—that the band "extolls the pleasure" of these horrors—the response broadly among Cannibal Corspe fans is "duh" and "it's all to make a buck." The band members defend themselves in a similar fashion by pointing out that the songs are the musical and lyrical equivalent of horror movies, and that "if you think it's us promoting violence towards women, you're totally missing the point."[144] Cannibal Corpse disassociate themselves from the content they write about and refute Dole's implied message that people who listen to this music will end up committing the activities they

[142] Gold, "Gross Profit."
[143] Gold, "Gross Profit."
[144] Travers, "George 'Corpsegrinder' Fisher."

hear about in the lyrics. Regardless of the band's intentions with their lyrics, it is clear that their lyrical content is extreme by the standards of mainstream American culture.

The sound of "Butchered at Birth" too is unquestionably extreme. The vocals are exclusively of the death growl variety, which is one of the most immediate sonic signifiers of the death metal subgenre. The drums, like with Slayer, are rapid fire and relentless, and they rely heavily on double-bass drumming techniques. The band's drummer Paul Mazurkiewicz says "My big influence for playing drums, and I think a lot of peoples' influence, is Slayer. You know? They were one of the breakthrough bands. That was a big band for us."[145] However, the drums in "Butchered at Birth" take the most intense sounds of "Angel of Death" and make them standard, ratcheting up the extremity of the drumming style one step beyond Slayer. The tempos, aside from being very fast, are noticeably inconsistent between each instance of repeated material; while this variation reads as sloppy to me, it might be seen as less polished and more authentic to members of the extreme metal underground. The effects are almost the inverse of "Angel of Death": the instruments have lots of reverb added in a manner that smooths over the chaos and performance infelicities that occur as such break-neck speeds. The vocals have no reverb, which makes them stand out of the chaos as if they are being screamed in your ear while the music is performed from the stage—the sounds of the instruments have time to bounce around the concert space while the vocals are absorbed instantly and in all their unobscured ugliness.

The guitar sound, though similar to Slayer's in "Angel of Death," is produced in a technologically extreme way that merits explanation. Lineup changes and a lack of specific evidence make it difficult to know exactly how the track was recorded, but it is known generally

[145] "Cannibal Corpse—Eats Moscow Alive (1993) [HD]," YouTube video, uploaded by Richard Andrei, December 26, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VPlzvEP1DQ&t=217s, 24:38.

and apparent in videos that the band played guitars with humbucker pickups into amps with powerful preamp sections (Marshall JCM, Mesa/Boogie Rectifier, or Crate GX130C amps are the most frequently seen or mentioned).[146] To push their already heavily distorted amps even further, guitarists Pat O'Brien and Rob Barrett boosted their signals with Boss Metal Zone pedals, infamous pedals in the guitar community known for creating a heavily distorted sound in amplifiers that were meant to be "clean," or completely undistorted.[147] To give a sense for how powerful the pedal is, European music retailer Thomann produced a video about what would happen if you played music through seven Metal Zone pedals.[148] To summarize its contents: one Metal Zone sounds appropriately metal, two sound like the amplifier is struggling to keep up, and any more than two is essentially an unusable feedback squeal. While the pedal can be adjusted to produce more functional levels of gain than seen in the video, the fact that the band used such a pedal with high gain amplifiers is at very least symbolic of the extremity of the music.

Though the song for most listeners would fall into the "formless noise" category due to its lacking anything resembling tonality or melody, "Butchered at Birth" is organized into segments that are usually about ten to fifteen seconds and marked by changing tempos and riff material. Most of these sections are upwards of 300 bpm and highly chromatic, which is standard fare for death metal. However, there are some notable musical moments. The first is a "slow riff" (112 bpm) initially heard fifty-four seconds into the song that is built around a tritone and octave above the lowest open string. The other is a 7/4 riff first heard at one minute and forty-three

[146] For an example of the myriad amps hypothetically used in their performances, see "Cannibal Corpse—Pat O'Brien Guitar Gear Rig and Equipment," *Uber Pro Audio*, accessed 8/21/2022, https://www.uberproaudio.com/who-plays-what/432-cannibal-corpse-pat-obrien-guitar-gear-rig-and-equipment.
[147] Kory Grow, "Cannibal Corpse: Gory Details," July 21, 2009, https://www.guitarworld.com/features/cannibal-corpse-gory-details.
[148] "What do 7 BOSS Metalzones sound like? | Because You Asked For It | Thomann," YouTube video, uploaded by Thomann's Guitars & Basses, October 27, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI3SkN40MNg.

seconds into the song where the guitar plays triplets by "hammering on" and "pulling off" the string, meaning they articulate the notes by striking and pulling off the string with the fretting hand alone rather than with the picking hand. On paper the song seems somewhat formulaic and uninventive. But in context this compositional strategy provides a perfect backdrop for the delivery of the guttural lyrics; the repeated riffs and organizational sections are primarily accompaniment, rather than feature. The fact that the vocals lack reverb in order to make them seem more present than the instruments further demonstrates how this song is actually meant to emphasize the vocals, despite their non-traditional sound and the complexity of the accompaniment.

Conclusion

The early metal studies canon emerged as the result of cultural occurrences of the 1980s, when metal was culturally prevalent and in need of defense from attackers on several fronts. Though metal from the 1980s is stylistically diverse, music from the lite and classic heavy metal subgenres were dominant, with broader cultural circulation than the underground, "extreme" subgenres. By studying the canons of Walser and Weinstein, we witness this stylistic heterogeneity in discographies and lists of notable metal bands and albums.

Lite metal is a glitzy pop music comprised primarily of mid-tempo rock songs about sex, drugs, and parties.[149] Songs like Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" feature major and minor modes, though guitar solos will feature both diatonic and blues scales, and drumming that rarely deviates from traditional 4/4 rock beats. Lite metal makes use of conspicuous effects to create sonic

[149] These mid-tempo songs are frequently contrasted with "power ballads," which are slow, sentimental songs that maintain a similar diatonicism to the standard mid-tempo songs and feature guitar solos that emphasize lyricism over virtuosity. See Andy Hicken, "'The Wishes of Your Parents': Power Ballads in Tana Toraja, Indonesia," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22 (2010): 198–218.

interest and to differentiate one song from another; a prime example of a conspicuous effect is the use of the talk box on the "woah woah woahs" in the introduction to Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer." The style and visuals of lite metal aim to be rebellious in the tradition established by rock musicians like Elvis Presley; its bands feature handsome, long-haired men who dress in flashy outfits, smile in music videos, and appear to enjoy making music for fans. While lite metal was controversial with moral conservatives in the 1980s, forty years later it can be heard performed by cover bands at small town festivals in the Midwest and at conservative political rallies.

Classic heavy metal overlaps with lite metal in its use of traditional 4/4 rock beats and guitar solos that feature diatonic and blues scales. However, its songs are written primarily in blues modalities, reflecting a more direct link to the blues roots of rock 'n' roll music. It too features mid-tempo songs about hedonistic topics, though it has significantly fewer ballads. And, as shown by songs like AC/DC's "Back in Black," classic heavy metal has the potential for major commercial success despite being less explicitly aimed at wooing television audiences in comparison to lite metal. Despite their differences, lite metal and classic metal are closer to each other stylistically than they are to thrash and extreme metal; this is visualized with the split between the left and right halves of Table 2.1 earlier in this chapter.

Thrash metal teeters on the boundary between extreme and non-extreme metal. While its singers still sing, they do so harshly and in a way that hints at the screams and grunts of extreme metal. Thrash tempos exceed what is danceable, or even comfortable, for many listeners. Its drumming incorporates techniques that produce more notes and more energy than standard rock drumming. Major and blues modes are avoided in thrash songs in favor of minor and more exotic modes like Phrygian. The lyrics of Slayer's "Angel of Death" push into extreme territory by

being about the horrors of the holocaust. Though Slayer's lyrics are more shocking than some thrash lyrics, they still exemplify that thrash lyrics are distinct from those found in lite and classic metal. And thrash musicians and fans wear T-shirts and denim jackets in a seeming effort to resist the glamour and sex appeal of lite metal.

Extreme metal takes the elements of thrash that depart from lite and classic metal and push them even further away from what fans of popular forms of metal appreciate. The lyrical subject matter centers on topics like graphic violence and Satanism. Extreme metal features chromaticism and dissonant intervals in its riffs to signal its avoidance of blues and major modes. Many of its subgenres avoid guitar solos altogether, focusing instead on complex meters, rhythms, song forms, and other facets of complexity that resist being identified as "virtuosic." In the first metal studies canon, extreme metal is the polar opposite of lite metal in its style and content. Extreme metal is also lite metal's opposite in terms of its popular appeal in mainstream culture, as it tends to sell relatively few albums in comparison.

Ultimately, despite the notable influence of Walser's work, it is Weinstein's preference for the underground forms of metal that shows through in the later canons of metal studies. Engaging with metal studies leads inevitably to engaging with extreme metal music; extreme metal is metal studies' disciplinary preference, and cultural capital in metal studies flows from engagement with extreme metal music.

However, Walser's work is a constant reminder that extreme metal's place in metal studies is not some natural law of metal music. Metal studies has sufficient basis in its history to allow for the study of popular forms of metal. The question then becomes, "why is extreme metal so disproportionately prevalent in metal studies?" In part, it is the abjectness attributed to these popular forms of metal, their lacking good taste for the metal studies "cultural elite," that

relegates them from the central discourses of metal studies. On the other hand, scholars were interested in extreme metal because it afforded opportunities to document communities whose music pushed the boundaries of what counted as music, or whose behaviors were unlike that seen in popular forms of metal. Extreme metal was fresh, and its peculiarities merited deeper investigation.[150] Regardless of scholarly intention, engaging with popular forms of metal does not easily lead to winning metal studies arguments, nor to publication and advancement in the field; this is especially true for scholarship in the two canons I outline in the next two chapters. The dominance of extreme metal in metal studies perpetuates itself because of the professional realities of academia.

The next two chapters present contrasting cases of how extreme metal dominates metal studies, with one focusing on presenting the music as an elite artform and the other focusing on how it creates a global community that resists oppression. Chapter 3 presents the canon of extreme metal elitists, the second canon, whose scholars present a defense of extreme metal music that asserts its superiority to popular forms of metal that are less complex and more approachable. The canon in Chapter 4, the third canon, is more inclusive than the second canon due to its broader geographical reach and its acceptance of the popular forms of metal. However, the bands it includes that come from outside the centers of power in the metal world are overwhelmingly from the more extreme forms of metal. Given the egalitarian stances of the ISMMS, and the fact of heavy metal's popularity in the 1980s, the third canon is superior to the second in modeling the values of the Society and meeting the goal stated in Chapter 1 of presenting what is good in metal (rather than what is "not bad"). Yet both overemphasize the importance of extreme metal in metal history. Ultimately, scholars committed to both of these

[150] For instance, Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 4–5.

canons take the path of least resistance toward winning arguments in their disciplines by maintaining their epistemological preferences while canonizing extreme metal because it holds the most cultural capital in the academy.

Chapter 3

The Second Canon: Extreme Metal Seriousness

On December 14, 2009, journalist Ben Ratliff wrote an article for the *New York Times* titled "Thank You, Professor, That Was Putrid" about a metal-oriented symposium called Hideous Gnosis.[1] Held on the twelfth of that month in a Williamsburg, Brooklyn, bar called the Public Assembly, Hideous Gnosis was a one-day event dedicated to the development of "black metal theory." The subgenre of black metal, named after the 1982 album *Black Metal* by the band Venom, is an extreme form of metal most commonly associated with the wearing of black and white face paint called "corpse paint," anti-Christian and Satanic themes, and a musical style that generally uses high-pitched screams, tremolo-picked guitar riffs that feature tritones and other dissonant intervals, and rapid, double-bass-style drumming. Black metal theory uses the aesthetics of black metal and the academic work of continental philosophers like Georges Bataille, Roland Barthes, and Michel Foucault to create knowledge that seeks, in the words of conference contributor Scott Wilson, "the blackening of discourse itself wherein the forces of black metal restore some of the powers and dangers of discourse."[2] The event spawned two other conferences on black metal theory, both in 2011, titled Melancology and P.E.S.T. (Philial, Epidemic, Strategy, Tryst).[3]

Hideous Gnosis, as described by Ratliff, seemed to match the dark and misanthropic leanings of black metal music and its fans; he said the event "could have used a few dozen more

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[1] Ben Ratliff, "Thank You, Professor, That Was Putrid," *New York Times*, December 14, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/15/arts/music/15metal.html.
[2] Scott Wilson, "BAsileus philosoPHOrum METaloricum," in *Hideous Gnosis: Black Metal Theory Symposium 1*, ed. Nicola Masciandaro (N.P: blackmetaltheory.blogspot.com, 2010), 33–51.
[3] You can find symposium posters at Edia Connole, "Interview on Black Metal Theory—Dominik Irtenkauf Interviews Edia Connole," November 25, 2014, https://queenmobs.com/2014/11/interview-on-black-metal-theory-dominik-irtenkauf-interviews-edia-connole/.

spectators and a temperature boost of about 15 degrees."[4] He further mentioned how he could understand why people might be skeptical of academics theorizing youth culture, and provided the example of a commenter on the online forum for *Decibel* magazine who argued that black metal "'has nothing to do with being intellectual and everything to do with not wanting to try and break every little thing apart' for analysis."[5] This commenter, angered by how academics were misrepresenting black metal as cerebral and complex, was not alone.

As might be expected, a number of critics, many anonymous or under a metal moniker, voiced their opinions about the conference on the internet. In a collection of comments included in the documents section of the conference publication, *Hideous Gnosis*, we see viewpoints ranging from supportive to outright hostile. One anonymous commenter said

> I imagine this to be more an event open to possibilities. Nothing is outside of power's discourses, Black metal signifies as part of the existing order, in the same way as theory. Bringing together both discourses will probably make more sense than most people think.[6]

Whereas our anonymous commenter felt that black metal theory was a worthy area of study, user "raw, obsolete," expressed skepticism that all roads would lead to a useful product.

> It's hard to imagine that Theory can bring much to Black Metal, a fundamentally Romantic and anti-/pre-Theoretic activity. Blackened Theory—destructive, chaotic evil, inhuman—is imaginable. Theoried Blackness is harder to imagine. Can the tools of Theory be tools for Blackness?[7]

And, to choose just one example of the many critics who thought the whole enterprise was something of a joke, another anonymous commenter said, "Fuck, this is hilarious. In a bad

[4] Ratliff, "Thank You, Professor."
[5] Ratliff, "Thank You, Professor."
[6] Nicola Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," in *Hideous Gnosis,* 271.
[7] Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," 267.

way."[8] The above comments display a range of attitudes, but dismissive, angry criticism dominated the comments.

While there is abundant skepticism and resistance toward intellectualizing about (or *with*) black metal, what is striking is that Ratliff validates the efforts of these scholars.

> Was the afternoon humorous, ridiculous . . . ? Not really. . . . To the contrary it felt necessary. Despite what black-metal musicians might proclaim . . . their work is basically philosophy. It is theoretical, a grid for looking at life, with ancient roots. It could use a critical apparatus, and though the afternoon's many citings of Continental philosophers like Lacan, Derrida, and Battaile might have seemed ludicrously distant to the practice of black metal, such writings relate to the subgenre's big subjects: death and time.[9]

Here we see praise for the work done by the black metal theorists, praise that not only says that the music itself is philosophy, but that the scholarly work being done augments the music by giving it depth and focus. Ratliff, whose critical work in award-nominated books and publications like the *Times,* NPR, *Slate,* and *Rolling Stone* mainly focuses on jazz, gives Hideous Gnosis a public credibility and mainstream exposure that a great many small (and perhaps large) conferences could only wish to have. Most importantly, Ratliff's criticism lends seriousness to a conference and subject matter which could be viewed as frivolous by black metal fans, more "mainstream" metal fans, and the public at large.

This chapter is about a second canon in metal studies, one that solidified in the 2000s, that posits that extreme metal is "not bad" by asserting that it is serious music. As seen in the previous chapter on the first canon, cultural conservatives in the 1980s sought to censor various contemporary styles of music. These calls for censorship targeted metal specifically and included bands from the collection of underground subgenres we now call extreme metal. Scholars of the

[8] Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," 268.
[9] Ratliff, "Thank You, Professor."

second canon, by asserting the seriousness of metal music, join the tradition of defending metal music started by the first canon.

However, the reason for the second canon's defense is not as clear as the one for the first canon, and the methods used are questionable. By the 2000s, extreme metal music was no longer the target that it was in the 1980s. This points to the defense of the second canon being more of a disciplinary convention established by the first canon than a reaction to a present need. Further, extreme metal was still an underground subgenre in the 2000s and was far overshadowed in mainstream culture by the successes of the subgenres Erik Smialek dubbed "abject" due to their pariah status in the extreme metal community: nü metal early in the decade and metalcore after that.[10] So scholars of the second canon constructed a defense of extreme metal that maintained the first canon's defense of metal as a voice against the dominant culture while they also asserted extreme metal's superiority to non-extreme forms of metal. For the second canon, extreme metal became an influential, high-art, avant-garde movement within metal that was misunderstood or detested by most listeners but held value to those who learned to navigate its complexity and unconventionality because it modeled a manner of resisting cultural norms. Yet the practice of highlighting the unseriousness of abject forms of metal weakens the credibility of the defense: if extreme metal needed support to survive, why would it degrade other members of its community?

This chapter begins by establishing that seriousness is a complicated and powerful phenomenon in the second canon and in the metal community as a whole. Seriousness is not only a descriptor of the music in this canon, but is a manner of behaving toward metal music and culture that emphasizes a resolute commitment to both the morals and aesthetics of one or more

[10] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," especially Chapter 2, "Extreme Metal and its Others," 65–114. See my Chapter 1 for more on this.

of the second canon's favored subgenres *and* to the central epistemological frameworks that inform academic work in the same canonic space. The binary opposite of seriousness in the second canon is frivolousness, a manner of behavior shown by unserious metal fans who violate or abandon their commitment to serious metal. This divide between seriousness and frivolousness marks the boundary in the canon between good and bad taste and allows the community to establish connoisseurship among its members.

I establish a historical and cultural basis for the cultivation of seriousness in the second canon by analyzing three manners of seriousness that influence the second canon: seriousness in the metal community, seriousness in the academy, and nineteenth-century German musical seriousness in the context of Germany's emergent nationhood. I then outline second canon seriousness itself, drawing on examples of canonized music as well as scholarly criticism and analysis of metal of the extreme and non-extreme varieties. The canonized music portion focuses on the shift from the more genre-balanced time of Walser and Weinstein toward the almost exclusive focus on extreme music. The scholarly criticism and analysis portion focuses on Keith Kahn-Harris's *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* and the *Hideous Gnosis* conference publication. My analysis of these scholarly works illustrates how the second canon emphasizes extreme metal's seriousness by painting it as the vanguard in the battle against the mainstream while attacking the credibility of other forms of metal to make extreme metal look better by comparison.[11]

[11] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*; Masicandaro, ed., *Hideous Gnosis*.

Seriousness in the Metal Community, in the Academy, and in Nineteenth-century Germany

While I am not suggesting that Ratliff caused black metal theory to become important to popular or scholarly discourse on metal (it is not), I consider him part of an intellectual community that places emphasis on serious music and employs seriousness as a tool for canonization of particular types of music.[12] Seriousness, like heavy metal, is a site of contested and shifting meanings. It is a tool for the justification of elite tastes as well as one used to lend credibility to anything vying for consideration in the canon. Seriousness is the privilege of the established tradition and the Promised Land for those things that are outside the tradition seeking entry. When applied to music, seriousness imbues pieces or performances with complex meanings that are understood by educated listeners. These meanings enrich the music and often constitute a significant part of the pleasure of engaging in a musical experience.

While seriousness is an attribute of certain kinds of music, it is also a manner of behaving toward such musical output that displays cultural capital for likeminded members of the community. In *Distinction,* Pierre Bourdieu argues that demonstrations of proper taste in high culture require a display of distance and disinterestedness in viewership as theorized by Kant and his "pure gaze."[13] Demonstrating one's cultural capital in disinterested situations calls for a viewer "to be able to play the games of culture with the playful seriousness which Plato demanded, a seriousness without the 'spirit of seriousness,'" as a result of their ability to operate apart from financial concern.[14] The fact that the French elite as theorized by Bourdieu had a

[12] For more on Black Metal Theory's reception in metal studies, see Connole, "Interview on Black Metal Theory." Irtenkauf says "I know some scholars who work in the field of Metal Studies who don't own a very high opinion of Black Metal Theory as the writings seem too oblique and abstract, not closely connected to the object of interest, that is black metal."
[13] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 4.
[14] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 54–55.

specific manner of behaving around serious art objects shows that they consciously or unconsciously understood the importance of enacting their identity correctly in such situations. As we will see, the extreme metal community is no different in its need to behave seriously toward serious artistic output.

Seriousness is often comparative. Things can be serious unto themselves, but usually come paired in an oppositional binary with something that is either unserious or that impedes people from recognizing the merit of the serious object. Complicating the place of seriousness in his study of elite tastes, Bourdieu writes that the upper class looks down on the seriousness with which the middle and lower classes value representations that reflect reality; this may be a reflection of his belief that

> tastes (i.e., manifested preferences) are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference. It is no accident that, when they have to be justified, they are asserted purely negatively, by the refusal of other tastes. In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance ("sick-making") of the tastes of others.[15]

Seriousness, as a manner of approaching taste, can be used to create a negative perception of "the other" and a positive perception of the self. Yet seriousness is not simply monolithic in binary opposition to unseriousness. In the field Bourdieu studies, interested and disinterested seriousness are set against each other, with disinterestedness possessing cultural capital due to its demonstrating philosophical education and lack of material need. Interested seriousness is devalued precisely because the display of interest inherent to it betrays the class and education of the interested party. It is not just seriousness *per se* that determines cultural boundaries but the manner of seriousness defined by a person's demonstrative interaction with the aesthetic object. Most importantly, seriousness is not always found in the concrete characteristics of the aesthetic

[15] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 5 and 56.

object in question but is gained in contrast to the unseriousness (or unfashionable seriousness) of the object that is different and is defined by its perceived opposition to the serious object. This binary becomes an important manner by which identity boundaries are drawn around taste and communities formed around identity boundaries.

As shown in the previous chapter, metal music studies fought for the seriousness of metal music since its inception. Walser especially made great efforts to highlight the music's quality through comparisons to classical music in his third chapter.[16] In the second canon this effort becomes more pronounced, in part because the culture of extreme metal itself fosters what Nicola Allett rightly calls "connoisseurship."[17] Extreme metal fans often adopt "a 'high' culture position to define [their] community and reinforce a sense of boundaries and membership," all in order to "distinguish extreme metal as 'serious' music, distance extreme metal music from the mainstream, and justify its extremity and profanity as art."[18] Within the academy, Keith Kahn-Harris demonstrates his connoisseurship by highlighting extreme metal's polarizing musical complexity.

> I define extreme metal as taking all the musical elements of heavy metal and then pushing them one step further, to the point whereby you start departing from conventional aspects of music. So, most outsiders would say, "Oh, that's just a noise." It's actually a very complex form of music. And delving into that complexity is part of the fun.[19]

Kahn-Harris draws clear symbolic boundaries between insiders who understand what the music is trying to accomplish and outsiders who dismiss the music due to lack of understanding. While Kahn-Harris's defense of the music creates a tacit invitation to engage with extreme metal, extreme metal fans are not always so open and inviting. As mentioned in my first chapter, some

[16] Walser, "Eruptions," 57–107.
[17] Nicola Allett, "The Extreme Metal 'Connoisseur,'" in *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures*, 167–81.
[18] Allett, "The Extreme Metal 'Connoisseur,'" 178.
[19] Dunn and McFayden, "Metal Evolution—Extreme Metal | FULL EPISODE," 4:20.

fans aim to diminish the seriousness of mainstream metal through positioning extreme metal as superior to popular, abject subgenres.[20] This exclusionary, elitist position is similar to ones held by some present-day adherents of classical music and bop and post-bop jazz: "our" music is complicated, challenging, and not for the "average" listener.

Unlike with the first canon, which emerged as the result of attacks from conservative groups on metal music, participants in the second canon's defense of metal occupy a more complex position due to the defense-based history of metal studies, their obligations to their respective disciplines, and the balancing act between their love of the music and the need to distance themselves from many of the behaviors found in the extreme metal scene. Second-canon scholars' fandom within an underground music subculture allows them to define themselves in opposition to an imaginary, "mainstream" community whose members dislike extreme metal. At the same time, these scholars largely do not ignore the problematic behaviors that exist in extreme metal communities. It is important to distinguish between non-scholar extreme metal fans, whose ability to ignore or dismiss moral and political problems in the scene Kahn-Harris theorizes as "reflexive anti-reflexivity," and scholars who occupy the ambivalent position of appreciating the music while questioning (or detesting) the politics.[21] Kahn-Harris draws this boundary clearly in *Extreme Metal*.

> Asserting that extreme metal is a significant and interesting phenomenon does not necessarily confer value on it. In fact, it is precisely the value of extreme metal that is in question in this book. It is hard to know how to respond to lyrics dealing with murder, sexual assault, and violence. Even harder to understand how to treat instances of flirtation and sometimes outright embrace of fascism and racism. The dividing line between fantasy and reality has at times been extremely porous for extreme metal protagonists. This book . . . explicitly seeks to ask difficult questions with the aim of providing new perspectives on the politics of extreme metal.[22]

[20] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," especially Chapter 2, "Extreme Metal and its Others: Metal Audiences' Hostility Towards Adolescence," 65–114.
[21] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 144–52.
[22] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 6–7.

Kahn-Harris's mission to "spark a debate about the politics of extreme metal both within and without the extreme metal world," and his ambivalent position as a model for engagement, have been tremendously impactful within metal studies. A notable body of scholarship is indebted to his example. Phillipov documents the discomfort she experienced at a Cannibal Corpse show when she saw female fans wearing "Fucked with a Knife" T-shirts (after one of their songs); she called this behavior "reflexive anti-reflexivity *par excellence*."[23] Sonia Vasan expresses a similar discomfort after attending a death metal show where a man said into a microphone, "Hey, be careful when you mosh. There's girls in the audience and we don't want anybody getting hurt. Remember, if you wanna hurt a girl, fuck her in the ass!" Vasan says that

> like the other women in the audience that night, I consider myself a fan of metal music and a member of the global metal subculture. Yet I also consider myself a feminist, and as such I often find myself at odds with the highly masculinist, sometimes misogynistic attitudes that infuse metal music and its culture.[24]

It is clear that extreme metal does not get a "free pass" in metal music studies; the morals and politics of the scene are openly questioned in a manner that generates nuanced scholarship that highlights the complexities of metal fandom and scene participation.

Yet, despite the productivity sparked by this debate, even critical writing about extreme metal bolsters the position of extreme metal in metal studies canons because it provides more instances of canonization and more engagement with the music and culture; I view this as similar to the way that outrage creates more traffic to hateful videos on the internet. Further, second-canon scholarship defends extreme metal by pointing to its complexity, and presents criticism to promote change rather than silence the music or disband extreme metal culture entirely. These scholars discuss extreme metal because its complex landscape is academically interesting and

[23] Phillipov, *Death Metal*, 134–35.
[24] Sonia Vasan, "Women's Participation in the Death Metal Subculture" (PhD diss., University of Houston, 2010).

because they like the music; these facts perpetuate the canon and maintain the "metal is not bad" argument because of the hope for redemption and the acknowledgement of good qualities. The perpetuation of extreme metal in metal studies is not necessarily a result of the intention of the scholars, or of an uncritical effort, but a fact of canonization.

Within the camp of those who express ambivalence about extreme metal are the scholars who might be labeled as "infiltrators"; those who, while appreciating the music, study the communities that are the object of their research with the intent to be critique immoral behavior in the hope of creating change. The chief example of this is Harris M. Berger's interviews with death metal musician, Dann Saladin.

> While I have only the greatest respect for Dann Saladin as a musician and social observer, I could not help questioning some of his interpretations of the death metal scene. . . . I engaged Dann in dialogue, and our conversation revolved around the issues of race and class.

Berger used the rapport he established with Saladin through several previous interviews to discuss topics including his stances on radical toleration (of Nazis most specifically) and on how far hard work can take a person in a capitalist society.[25] Rather than ending conversations with Saladin due to discomfort, Berger gained knowledge of politics in the death metal scene and may have brought about positive change by altering or nuancing Saladin's opinions. Though such work contributes to the prominence of extreme metal in the canon, the good it does for the egalitarian aims of the ISMMS should not be ignored.

Due to their generally taking the music seriously, scholars of the second canon lend a certain amount of power to extreme metal connoisseurs (scholarly and non-scholarly) to promote the musical values of their preferred corpus. Though it cannot be stated enough that a great many

[25] Harris M. Berger, "A Critical Dialogue on the Politics of the Metal Underground," in *Metal, Rock, and Jazz*, 276–94.

scholars are clear in their criticism of the politics and morals of the extreme metal scene, the proximity of the scholars to the morally questionable extreme metal scene members due to their mutual appreciation of the music is worth noting. This proximity brings into focus how scholarship contributes to the disproportionate representation of extreme metal in metal studies, and how seriousness at very least implies superiority to that which is unserious in most scholarly output. Recalling Appiah's analysis of the Robbers Cave experiment mentioned in the previous chapter, it is the prerogative of advocates of extreme metal to define opposing collective identity groups through conflict.[26] Extreme metal connoisseurs who practice reflexive anti-reflexivity assert the superiority of extreme metal over non-extreme metal. Reflexive scholars sometimes imply it. By examining the operation of seriousness in the second canon, I hope to offer further information for reflexive engagement with extreme metal. The exclusionary nature of seriousness in musical communities running parallel to the exclusionary nature of beliefs like racism and fascism in extreme metal must be treated with extreme care in order to prevent a porous relationship between the two modes of exclusion.

In what follows I present three modes of seriousness that inform how metal studies scholars working in the second canon promote extreme metal. The first is seriousness in the metal community, and the second is academic seriousness. Third is nineteenth-century German seriousness, which I present to show the influence of German criticism and musical thought on metal musical connoisseurship and American historical musicology. I ultimately tie these three threads into an understanding of metal studies seriousness.

[26] Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity*, 62–64.

Metal Seriousness

Seriousness within elitist metal circles demands a steadfastness of character in which one projects their metalness as having always existed and maintains their metalness until they die. In Sam Dunn's classic *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, metal musician Rob Zombie says that

> it's like a lifestyle, the music. You know, everything else seems like, "Oh yea I like it, I like it for a week, I lose interest," but metal, metal fans love it forever. . . . I'm not a casual person: when I like something, it's like real, and it's not casual music. Like, no one goes, "yea, I was really big into Slayer one summer." Ya know? I've never met that guy. I've only met the guy who's got "Slayer" carved across his chest.[27]

To prove this last sentence was not meant metaphorically, the documentary shifts from the above passage to footage of someone having Slayer carved into their arm and then sterilized with flame in order to leave scarification.[28] This steadfast commitment to metal is related to what several philosophers, mainly of the English analytic and divinity-oriented variety, have called "moral seriousness."

Moral seriousness, the unwavering belief in and practice of one's morality in the face of challenges, serves as the key factor in the second canon for establishing the symbolic boundaries of the community. Professor, ordained Anglican minister, and philosopher Keith Ward elaborates on how moral seriousness is practiced.

> It is quite obvious that a man who stands by his moral principles with difficulty and in [the] face of many obstacles, even to the extent of giving his life rather than denying these principles, is a morally serious person. He might be contrasted with a man who gives up or modifies his moral principles whenever their implementation becomes difficult, or threatens to harm his interests; and this person might be called morally frivolous.[29]

Here we see that serious men (and I assume those of other genders) stand by their morals despite how it might impact them adversely as times, tastes, and convictions change. Many metal fans

[27] Dunn, McFayden, and Wise, dirs., *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, 20:12.
[28] Dunn, McFayden, and Wise, dirs., *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, 20:34.
[29] Keith Ward, "Moral Seriousness," *Philosophy* 45 (1970): 114.

value engaging with the music and culture in a morally serious manner and behave in ways that demonstrate this seriousness, as discussed above. Further, some metal fans do suffer for their preferences. Members of the Iraqi band Acrassicauda received threats in 2003 for being "Americanized" and "playing music for Satan"; these threats were especially potent due to the turmoil in the country after the fall of Saddam Hussein.[30] What is important for understanding the second canon is that metal fans contend with a cultural pressure to behave in a morally serious fashion.

Just like with boundaries of identity, moral seriousness is often established in contrast to an oppositional other. Following the previously mentioned Rob Zombie clip is an appearance from author Chuck Klosterman, who says that

> metal really seemed to tell people that "you feel weird, but you're not." That's why I was so interested in the idea of the Kiss Army. It was this idea that, if you like Kiss, that means that like, actually, you're part of this massive, like, coven of people who have like the same values you have. Kiss songs always seem to imply that, as Kiss fans, we're being somewhat persecuted for it. Like if you listen to the song "Crazy Nights" it somehow implies people are trying to stop us from liking Kiss. You know? And I think that's really a brilliant idea. And I think that's part of the draw to metal.[31]

Klosterman points out that metal fans rally around the sense that there is an outsider who is trying to make them stop liking metal. In reaction to this, metal fans rally around their identity with moral seriousness; Kiss fans have formed the famous "Kiss Army" fan club, whose name implies that Kiss fans would rather risk their lives in combat than compromise their principles. With this sense of belonging comes a sense that metal fans should not abandon their likeminded community because that would be giving in to those who would wish to control them and threaten the safety of their community. The boundaries of metal identity for serious metal fans

[30] Alvi, dir., *Heavy Metal in Baghdad*, 8:20.
[31] Dunn, McFayden, and Wise, dirs., *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, 20:38.

are drawn, in part, between those who enlist and those foes, real or imaginary, who would stop them from pursuing their happiness.

We also see in the above passage from Ward the need to contrast morally serious people with those who are frivolous. The serious/frivolous binary is important because we have in frivolousness a way of negating the aesthetic choices of a group on moral grounds.[32] Kiss is often unmetalled by those in the extreme metal community—Dani Filth of extreme band Cradle of Filth said Kiss "look the part, but they sing about love, and women, and bikinis, and stuff like that."[33] Filth praised the comparative lyrical seriousness of extreme metal pioneers Venom because they spoke about things like the devil and Hungarian countess and alleged serial murderer Elizabeth Báthory.[34] Anti-frivolousness creates narrow boundaries for who gets to participate in the creation of metal music and stagnates metal's musical development; if a morally serious metalhead, baptized in the doom of Black Sabbath and the power of Iron Maiden, listens to metal music with hip hop influence, they are faced with questions of moral seriousness due to the differing aesthetics, values, and in some cases even the supposed racial differences between metal and hip hop musicians.[35] By cementing values in the face of challenges, moral seriousness potentially incentivizes an oppositional and uncritical stance towards one's aesthetic others because it turns them into immoral beacons that are to be resisted.

Roger Crisp and Christopher Cowton, in "Hypocrisy and Moral Seriousness," suggest that hypocrisy, which they note is a catch-all Biblical term of moral criticism, can be categorized

[32] I find that, in a community where morality is largely demonstrated through and tied to aesthetic choices, the boundary between aesthetics and morals is blurry.
[33] Dunn and McFayden, "Metal Evolution—Extreme Metal | FULL EPISODE," 6:59.
[34] Dunn and McFayden, "Metal Evolution—Extreme Metal | FULL EPISODE," 6:47.
[35] For more on hip hop, race, and abject subgenres, see Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," Chapter 2, "Extreme Metal and its Others: Metal Audiences' Hostility Towards Adolescence," 65–114.

into forms that include pretense, blame, inconsistency, and complacency.[36] Across these categories we see, similarly to Ward's man of solitary conviction, that it is morally imperative to be consistent and steadfast in one's convictions, judgements, actions, and inactions, and that those who are immoral likely behave with a frivolous relativism that leads to their inconsistent and ultimately bad thought and behavior. Complacency is perhaps the ultimate sin in metal seriousness because it shows that a band, rather than trying to be metal in the face of challenges from mainstream culture, has "sold out" in order to make their life easier by having more mainstream cultural opportunities. So serious metal fans must demonstrate their seriousness with consistent conviction in order to gain cultural capital.

Part of the reason extreme metal fans consider lite metal abject is due to the perception that many lite metal fans abandoned metal when lite metal fell out of popularity after its peak in the late 1980s. A comical but poignant example of this abandonment is the zebra-print-clad metal super-fan known as "Zebra Man" from the fan-made, cult-classic documentary titled *Heavy Metal Parking Lot*.[37] In the video, Zebra Man projects his metal identity by proclaiming repeatedly that "heavy metal rules" while demeaning the morally frivolous music of Madonna and "that punk shit." One might assume, based on Rob Zombie's prior claims about metal fans liking metal forever, that Zebra Man would remain a fan of metal music for the rest of his life. However, due to fan demand, Zebra Man was tracked down decades later and was found to no longer be a fan of metal; he said in fact that he "went to country, pretty much."[38] The perceived abandonability of lite metal contributes to the abjectness of lite metal for serious metal fans; if

[36] Roger Crisp and Christopher Cowton, "Hypocrisy and Moral Seriousness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1994), 343–49. Hypocrisy is identified as a "general term of moral criticism" on p. 346.
[37] "Heavy Metal Parking Lot (Judas Priest Concert 1986)," YouTube video, uploaded by Ivan NWOBHM, June 9, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBryTebK2Og, 9:11. The original existed on a heavily copied tape.
[38] "1986 Heavy Metal Parking Lot Where Are They Now 2006," YouTube video, uploaded by James Sanabria, November 28, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hSjnjmQ-AAI, 14:46.

Zebra Man could "go country," he is an example of the moral frivolity that exists in the lite metal community. Or, as one video titled "Poser Exposure: Zebraman From Heavy Metal Parking Lot" summarizes, "If you are not into Metal now …..[sic] then you never were."[39]

Academic Seriousness

In the context of knowledge production in the academy, a significant part of displaying seriousness stems from successful research and publication. Michèle Lamont's *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment* gives a picture of what professors consider serious research in the humanities and social sciences (the fields where metal studies most frequently operates). Through studying the peer-review funding panels of several major academic grants and fellowships, Lamont concludes that academic excellence is assessed according to criteria related to four distinct epistemological standards: constructivist, comprehensive, positivist, and utilitarian.[40] Of these, the first three are important here.

In her work with Grégoire Mallard and Joshua Guetzkow, "Fairness as Appropriateness: Negotiating Epistemological Differences in Peer Review," Lamont gives explanations for the three styles.

> Respondents who express a constructivist style favor extraintellectual rationales for the presentation of findings and antireductionist claims. In particular, they appreciate applicants who refer to their identity in explaining their choice of perspective or who adopt a reflexive stance concerning their relationship with their object. Reflexivity is conceived as a necessary part of the construction of the object in a way that results in better scholarship. This reflexive stance is often concomitant with an antireductionist style in the choice of methodological approach; recognizing that the researcher "constructs" her object and that her own identity shapes how she apprehends is

[39] "Poser Exposure: Zebraman From Heavy Metal Parking Lot," YouTube video, uploaded by foolsfearme, March 4, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4TIOKT2uig&t=96s, 2:39.
[40] Lamont, *How Professors Think*.

> antithetical to simplifying and decontextualizating it for the sake of producing generalizable knowledge. [41]

Scholars that employ the constructivist style create complicated responses to problems that arise from concerns that are not rooted primarily in abstract, intellectual thought; Lamont and company call such problems and responses "extraintellectual." Constructivists also believe that, due to the constructed nature of knowledge, they must acknowledge their identity and biases as a researcher in order to then represent their object of study most fairly.

This style overlaps and contrasts with the comprehensive style, which

> dismisses references to the identity or personal, social, or political motives of the researcher in the choice of topic and promotes the use of more exclusively intellectual rationales, while praising an antireductionist methodological approach. . . . We call this epistemological stance "comprehensive," because it resembles closely a style that [Max Weber] used in his writings promoting Verstehen as well as in his work on value neutrality.

The comprehensive style favors intellectual concerns and sees no need to acknowledge the identity of the knowledge creator, but still avoids reductionism like the constructivist style.

The positivist style favors "proposals that provide an intellectual account of the choice of perspective," that "draw on a method that can lead to generalization," and "that test hypotheses and methods appropriate for achieving this goal." The positivist style links with the comprehensive style in preferring to ask and answer theoretical, "intellectual" questions, as opposed to more practical or "extraintellectual" questions.[42]

While it is good fun to suggest that Walser is constructivist and Weinstein comprehensive, it is less important to my work to be able to locate specific academic work

[41] Grégoire Mallard, Michèle Lamont, and Joshua Guetzkow, "Fairness as Appropriateness: Negotiating Epistemological Differences in Peer Review," *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 34 (2009), 583.
[42] Mallard, Lamont, and Guetzkow, "Fairness as Appropriateness," 585–86.

within a particular epistemology than it is to understand that these epistemological categories reflect active debates within the academic world over what constitutes excellent work.

These academic styles relate to seriousness because they establish boundaries for the creation of serious work through parameters including the existence of universal knowledge, the importance of the identity of the researcher in the creation of knowledge, the use-value of knowledge in practical situations, the promotion of underappreciated or marginalized subject matter, and other issues that arise from efforts to understand the world through observation and contemplation. Most importantly, scholars use the word "serious" (or variants thereof) in reference to the quality of work.

The following examples are both drawn from Mallard, Lamont, and Guetzkow's work, and relate to scholars' position on whether it is valuable to simplify findings into generalizable theories. In the context of a panel meant to determine which applicants would receive grant funding, an anonymous anthropologist said,

> in one debate, [the other panelists would ask] "is this person contributing to a generalizable theory of politics, or nomothetic laws of politics, or a universal theory?" [They] argu[ed] that this person should be supported because he or she is making a theoretical contribution. *I don't take that argument very seriously*. . . . Because you can't do it! And, in fact, most people now understand they can't do it, but there are things about the discipline that reward it anyway. So most smart people understand, for instance, that you're not getting to a science of politics, but since they win out in battles where you can demonstrate a certain capacity to do a formal theory or use methods that make it look more like that, they continue to articulate around those questions.

This contrasting statement comes from a political scientist.

> You recognize [excellence] first of all by *the willingness of someone to stick their neck out seriously* to produce discomfirmable knowledge. . . . a good theory is one that maximizes the ratio between the information that is captured in the independent variable and the information that is captured in the prediction, in the dependent variable. [You have] to be systematic, because otherwise what you're doing is not replicable. Otherwise, what one is doing is a personal expression.[43]

[43] Mallard, Lamont, and Guetzkow, "Fairness as Appropriateness," 586–87. Emphasis mine.

Both of these scholars, despite their differing positions, claim seriousness for their preferred intellectual stances: the anthropologist favors avoiding generalizable theory while the political scientist believes that generalization is necessary and even courageous. Academic work, like music, art, literature, and even math and science, is a reflection of the preferences of the academics who create it at any given time in any given place. If certain work is considered to be serious, or is worthy of being taken seriously, it gains capital in the academic field and then benefits from opportunities for funding and accolades. The habitus of the academy then is a battle for the definition and possession of seriousness.

More specific to the second canon, there is a manner of expressing academic seriousness that involves using critical theory—meaning critiques of power, not specifically the German philosophical school—and revolves around academic capital found in peddling Nietzsche, Critical Theory (the German philosophical school), continental philosophy of the French variety (such as structuralism and post-structuralism), and psychoanalysis. These authors are not unknown to the first canon, as Walser cites the likes of Adorno and Foucault.[44] But by the time of *Extreme Metal*, Kahn-Harris is not only citing the classics of cultural studies and sociology that make up Walser and Weinstein's bibliographies respectively, but adding to Adorno and Foucault other staples like Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Julia Kristeva.[45] This canon of literature is a defining feature of the second canon, and it creates a tone of moral significance in

[44] Theodore W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981). Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald D. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).

[45] Theodore W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London: Verso, 1997); Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1977); Georges Bataille, *Literature and Evil*, trans. Alastair Hamilton (London: Marion Boyars, 1985); Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1990); Julia Kristeva, *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). I note that Weinstein also cites a fair amount of cultural studies scholarship.

the works based on its critical stances and Nietzschean views on self-empowerment (or the reflexive, ambivalent critique of these views).[46]

Academic seriousness emerged as a concern during the online debates about the validity of Hideous Gnosis. In the "Blog Comments" section of *Hideous Gnosis*, editor and black metal philosopher Nicola Masciandaro provides an example of such a critique. On December 7, 2009, Andreas Bauer wrote,

> while people can and should be meeting to discuss whatever they want, my stomach hurts to think of this as an academic event. 1. What's the reviewing process like? 2. Who are your peers? 3. What is their qualification, and—most importantly—4. Why do you think there is sufficient depth in B[lack] M[etal] to warrant for such a bold title as BM theory? While I agree BM can be and perhaps should be discussed academically for its contribution to arts & culture, I strongly disagree with the claim that BM has any underlying theory, ideologically, politically, spiritually, etc., that you couldn't fit in its entirety on the back of a beer coaster. And although I have been involved in the BM scene for many years myself and listen mostly to BM today, I refuse to recognize any (substantial) intellectual achievements of this movement, because there aren't any—even quoting Nietzsche can't help over this fact.[47]

Bauer brandishes his aca-fan credentials in order to argue that there is little point to theorizing black metal because it is anti-intellectual and experiential. Further, he highlights common criteria for evaluating excellence in academic circles; the presumed lack of qualified peer-reviewers and inappropriateness of the subject matter for the creation of substantial theory appear as reasons for questioning the seriousness of Hideous Gnosis.

While Masciandaro mounts a more substantial defense than given here, he displays his academic priorities when he says,

> so the irony here is the possibility of a situation where the "intellectual" may demonstrate himself to be a more serious and faithful and heavier metalhead (higher atomic number) than the "fan" who worries anti-intellectually about the former murdering to dissect his god, where the merely cultural metalhead is made anxious by the harmless threat of

[46] For one reflexive critique, see Kahn-Harris's *Extreme Metal*, Chapter 7, "Reflexivity, Music and Politics."
[47] Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," 269.

> someone who really believes (and therefore realizes in an essentially a-religious way) what to him is only a fantasy or just "music."[48]

Intellectualizing is, for Masciandaro and a great many metal studies scholars, a way to experience one's fandom more deeply as an expression of authentic metal identity. Ignoring Bauer's concerns for academic rigor and a culturally situated understanding of black metal, Masciandaro takes something of a comprehensive stance in which studying something complex in an intellectual fashion can enhance understanding and pleasure and, with a critical twist, can challenge harmful adherence to unquestioned dogma fostered by uncritical moral seriousness. He adds constructivist (and anarchist) to comprehensivist when he replies directly to Bauer's numbered questions by noting that

1) There is no review process.
2) People who love and love to think about black metal.
3) A will and capacity for #2
4) Why do you think of reality as so shallow and/or human nature so timid as to be incapable of creating a knowledge- and joy-producing practice called Black Metal Theory? For this there is absolutely no requirement that BM *contain* its own significance as an essence to be simply explicated . . . or that BM itself (whatever that is) be the practice of a theory.[49]

Seriousness for Masciandaro is best done by those who love to listen to and think about black metal, which shows his belief in the acknowledgment of his identity in knowledge creation. Black metal theory for Masciandaro is not found in the rigid strictures of canonized academic practice but in the intellectual spirit of discovering those things which will make us better (blacker?) humans.[50] Yet his intellectual spirit is founded upon texts and ideas that circulate in the academy. He finishes his response to Bauer with a p.s. that reads "quoting Nietzsche *always* helps: 'This—it turns out—is *my* way—where is yours?'—That is how I answered

[48] Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," 270.
[49] Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," 270.
[50] By "blacker," I am referring to the metal aesthetic and not essentialized racial characteristics.

those who asked me 'the way.' *The* way after all—it does not exist!'"[51] Masciandaro's intersectional aca-fan identity, and his desire to create a theory that straddles the line between black metal anarchy and radical philosophy, does not distance him from academic concerns about seriousness so much as situate him in particular strain with its own standards for what constitutes serious work.

Nineteenth-century German Seriousness

I include analysis of nineteenth-century German seriousness about music in this chapter for two primary reasons. The first is that classical music—whose canon is noticeably oriented toward German-speaking musicians from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—has influenced metal. I have mentioned previously Walser's work on this in his third chapter on classical appropriations in *Running with the Devil*.[52] Black Sabbath's bassist Geezer Butler admits he derived the riff for their song "Black Sabbath" from the Mars movement of Holst's *The Planets*.[53] Testament guitarist Alex Skolnick has written about the connections between metal and classical for New York Public Radio.[54] There are numerous examples of metal bands collaborating with symphony orchestras, most famously when Metallica played with the San Francisco Symphony for what became the live album *S&M*.[55] The relationship between classical

[51] Masciandaro, ed., "Blog Comments," 271. He is quoting/paraphrasing Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, though I am uncertain whether it was a particular translation. For another translation of this passage, see Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, trans. Thomas Common (Auckland, NZ: The Floating Press, 2009), 409.
[52] Walser, "Eruptions," 57–107.
[53] "Classical Roots in Metal Music," YouTube video, uploaded by Banger Films, August 24, 2020, 4:40, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=voGnIFw0Tkk.
[54] Alex Skolnick, "The Surprising Influence of Classical in Metal Music," *WQXR.org*, February 24, 2022, .
[55] Chris Krovatin, "10 Times Rock and Metal Artists Collaborated with Classical Musicians," *Kerrang*, February 2, 2021, https://www.kerrang.com/10-times-rock-and-metal-artists-collaborated-with-classical-musicians.

and metal is fairly straightforward in this way; metal musicians know about classical music and have embraced it in ways that demonstrate their belief in its power and musical seriousness.

The second and less straightforward reason is that nineteenth-century Germany's nationalist views on musical seriousness impact metal studies through the bridge of musicology. Drawing on Celia Applegate and Sanna Pederson, I begin by showing that the nineteenth-century German canon began as an effort to establish the seriousness of the emergent nation through its equally serious cultural output. This serious output was contrasted against the frivolous music of other nations, most commonly France. I then link the serious, German nationalist canon to musicology through the work of Joseph Kerman and James Hepokoski, two of the numerous musicologists noted by Applegate to have argued that German nationalism "had a hand in shaping the underlying assumptions of the musicological enterprise as a whole."[56] Kerman argues that musical analysis, a tool established by nineteenth-century German music critics to generate seriousness, is used by musicologists in their canons for the same reason. Hepokoski, noting the impact of Carl Dahlhaus's work on American musicology, demonstrates how Dahlhaus defended the serious, nationalist German canon from Marxist critics during epistemological battles in the German academy during the 1960s and 1970s. I connect musicology and metal by showing that prominent metal studies scholars Keith Kahn-Harris and Niall Scott cite authors like Susan McClary and Philip Bohlman. Once this three-part linkage is established, I draw on Bohlman, Norbert Elias, Lydia Goehr, and others to argue that the nineteenth-century German canon, musicology, and the second metal studies canon operate from a position of fear about the value of the cultural product they analyze. This fear leads to their establishing a serious/frivolous binary that promotes their culture at the expense of another.

[56] Applegate, "How German Is It," 276–77.

In “How German Is It?: Nationalism and the Idea of Serious Music in the Early Nineteenth Century,” Applegate shows that the nineteenth-century German musical community forged a unified musical identity around educated musical behavior and a canon of serious works that were linked to emerging German nationalism.[57] Pointing to Bourdieuan “‘objective divisions of the social world,’” Applegate centers this argument around the diminishing importance of professional musical opportunities in courts and churches with the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of the university-centered, cosmopolitan, bureaucratic intelligentsia. The musical community

> had much to gain by aligning itself with the national habitus; indeed, asserting the national-cultural significance of certain music and musicians was tantamount to claiming inclusion in educated society, a kind of shortcut to relevance and respect. By the same token, evidence of increasing national inflections in writings about music after 1800 is a strong indication . . . that they were working toward fuller integration into the circles of the educated elite. If some music could indeed be seen as an integral part of the cultural past, present, and future, then serious people, musically gifted or not, must undertake to acquire a better understanding of it.[58]

Relevant to metal studies is the linking of musical understanding to the educated elite. Winning academic arguments about metal’s value is a central goal of metal music studies. The crucial difference between early nineteenth-century German music and metal in this context is that metal, through most of its history and in most cases, is far from aligned with the national habitus. The serious branch of metal studies rather seeks to align metal music with the portion of the academic habitus whose views on musical seriousness were inherited from their German nationalist predecessors.

To show how philosophical arguments about the value of music were then transferred into practice, Applegate provides the case study of Carl Friedrich Zelter. Zelter, friend of Goethe,

[57] Applegate, “How German Is It,” 274–96.
[58] Applegate, “How German Is It,” 282-89, quoting p. 288. Bourdieu is mentioned on p. 286.

teacher of Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, and leader of the Berlin Singakademie, helped promote musical education to the cosmopolitan bureaucracy. Applegate says that

> Zelter believed (and not wrongly, in fact) that musical instruction and musical cultivation had fallen to a low level among the town and city population as a whole, that church music, particularly church singing, was in the midst of a full-blown crisis of existence, and that the population would benefit morally from a renewal of church and urban musical sociability. Although Zelter declined to lay specific blame for what he saw as the superficiality, frivolity, and dilettantism or much of contemporary musical life, he strongly implied that the princely rulers of the German states had too long neglected "serious" music in favor of the narrow and morally suspect cultivation of court opera.[59]

Like with extreme metal's attacks on lite metal, we see in Zelter's implicit pronouncements the practice of pointing to a frivolous musical form in order to bolster the importance of a serious alternative. Opera, and specifically non-German opera, became the target for serious German musicians and critics of the time.[60] Thomas S. Grey points out that, later in the century, "Offenbach's operettas were widely perceived as the very embodiment of the Second Empire's pleasures and vices—the frivolous irresponsibility and political cynicism that brought France low, as was often claimed at the time."[61] Sanna Pederson writes that serious Germans made

> an attempt to constitute art music not only aesthetically but also as a relation of nations: at the same time that autonomous music was being defined as distinctly and qualitatively different and better than entertainment music, German music was being proclaimed as high art by designating foreign music as frivolous, unsubstantial, and unworthy.

The nationalist discourse, which relied not only on asserting the quality of German people but their superiority to their European counterparts, informed the development of the discourse used to promote the symphony.[62]

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[59] Applegate, "How German Is It," 292.
[60] Sanna Pederson, "A. B. Marx, Berlin Concert Life, and German National Identity," *19th-Century Music* 18 (1994), 89.
[61] Thomas S. Grey, "*Eine Kapitulation*: Aristophanic Operetta as Cultural Warfare," in *Richard Wagner and His World*, ed. Thomas S. Grey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 91.
[62] Pederson, "A. B. Marx," 89.

Joseph Kerman links German nationalism to musicology through musical analysis as a means of musical criticism. He argues that "analyst-critics" analyzed German music to demonstrate

> a perfect, organic relation among all the analyzable parts of a musical masterpiece. . . . From the standpoint of the ruling ideology, analysis exists for the purpose of demonstrating organicism, and organicism exists for the purpose of validating a certain body of works of art.

Kerman argues this philosophy of organicism, which began in the nineteenth century in service of validating the superiority of German music, "continued long past the time of its historical impetus."[63] Given the title of the 1980 article these passages are drawn from is (famously) "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," Kerman's message is clear that historical musicology at the time of publication participated in German-centered criticism-analysis in its scholarship and canon creation.

Where Kerman spoke broadly about an intellectual practice, James Hepokoski points to Carl Dahlhaus and his "Project" as an influential defender of the "Austro-Germanic canon . . . from aggressively sociopolitical interpretations" that arose during epistemological battles between competing positivist/apolitical and critical/Marxist intellectual factions in the German academy of the 1960s and 1970s.[64]

> There is no denying that the Dahlhaus Project was centrally concerned with nineteenth-century German music—more explicitly, with a connotation-saturated repertory that had been pivotal in establishing a German national identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[65]

Hepokoski begins the article by saying that "Dahlhaus's *Nineteenth-Century Music* could alter the horizon of English-language musicology," and indeed the influence of Dahlhaus's thought is

[63] Kerman, "How We Got into Analysis," 315.
[64] James Hepokoski, "The Dahlhaus Project and Its Extra-musicological Sources," *19th-Century Music* 14 (1991): 222–23.
[65] Hepokoski, "The Dahlhaus Project," 225.

a clear linkage between the nineteenth-century German canon Applegate outlines and twentieth-century historical musicology.

Though musicology's place in metal studies is unimpeachable due to Walser's foundational work, its presence becomes less and less apparent in later metal studies work, especially in comparison to sociological and anthropological work. Still, musicology is there if you look. Keith Kahn-Harris's *Extreme Metal* cites not only Walser's *Running with the Devil* but also Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings*.[66] In a section on songwriting he cites both scholars to talk about how extreme metal's lack of melodic content and conventional "forms of closure and cadence" found in popular music creates an unsettled, transgressive sound that shows that "musicians within the scene take songwriting very seriously."[67] By being "anti-pop" in its compositional practice, extreme metal shows its seriousness in contrast to frivolous popular music.

For another example of musicology in metal studies, Niall Scott, the moderator of Hideous Gnosis, cites Philip Bohlman's "Musicology as Political Act" in an article about heavy metal and its projected apoliticalness.[68] In "Musicology as Political Act," Bohlman asserts that musicology uses seemingly apolitical tools like analysis to essentialize and discipline all music in the tradition of Western art music. Interestingly, he points to fear as the motivating factor for this disciplining.

> Musicology relies on a metaphysical notion of free-floating, universally valid symbols to create its object. One of the greatest fears of many musicologists is that these symbols are no more than representations, no more than one means of disciplining music among many others. I should even go so far as to say that there are times when musicology is driven by the fear that someone is "not really talking about 'the music'" or, even more ludicrously,

[66] Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, & Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).
[67] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 33.
[68] Ratliff, "Thank You, Professor"; Philip Bohlman, "Musicology as a Political Act," *Journal of Musicology* 11 (1993): 411–36; Niall Scott, "Heavy Metal and the Deafening Threat of the Apolitical," in *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures*, 233.

> that an article or book does not use sufficient musical examples to be about "the music." Musicology students struggle under the prerequisite of finding enough "music" to make their dissertations valid.

That these musicologists cling to the traditional epistemologies and methodologies of their discipline is striking when compared with professors of other disciplines who "no longer teach and do research on the objects identified in their letterheads."[69]

The parallels between fearful musicologists and Kerman's German analyst-critics are striking. There is a sense among many scholars that these German musical thinkers and analysts sought to canonize their national music due to a perceived insecurity they felt about themselves as Germans in comparison to other European nations.[70] This insecurity and fear provides an interesting frame with which to view the driving forces behind metal studies. Whereas metal studies so often focuses on the strength of its canonizers in the face of opponents, the comparison with nineteenth-century German analyst-critics and musicologists who are part of their intellectual lineage reveals a fragility among metal elitists who are asserting their connoisseurship to maintain control of their narrow but influential discourse.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Bourdieu's writings on taste and class are influenced by his being situated in France, and they stressed the comparative nature of taste in which "tastes . . . are the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference."[71] This oppositional facet of class identity extends very clearly to national identity. Christian Jansen points out in "The Formation of German Nationalism, 1740-1850," that German national identity was formed in opposition to Germany's "hereditary enemies," the Turks and the French.[72] Norbert Elias argues that German

[69] Bohlman, "Musicology as a Political Act," 419–24.
[70] Examples will be found below.
[71] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 56
[72] Christian Jansen, "The Formation of German Nationalism, 1740-1850," in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. Helmut Walser Smith (New York: Oxford, 2011), 235.

insecurity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is established in comparison to their imperial neighbors France and England.

> However one may want to evaluate it, the national pride, the collective self-esteem of the Germans has always been more fragile than that of peoples like the British and the French who have had a more continuous and even development. . . . Whenever it came into play, German national pride was a solemn and deadly serious matter. Given their insecurity, Germans felt themselves easily wounded. They were inclined to suspect others of looking down upon them. They almost seemed to expect it and were inclined, with or without reason, to become indignant and, as a counter, to lay especially strong emphasis on their own superiority. Even in their own feelings, they tended to fluctuate between a marked under-evaluation and a marked over-evaluation of themselves.[73]

While in his consideration of French elite society Bourdieu points to overt seriousness as something to be avoided, he argues that German intellectual elites used seriousness to create solidarity and shared goals. He relays the work of Norbert Elias, who demonstrates that German intellectuals in the nineteenth century defined themselves against their frivolous and superficial court, which derived its mode of operation from French courts of earlier centuries.[74] That these German intellectuals considered seriousness an important facet of their identity, and one that stood in contrast to French unseriousness, is important for the formation of the classical music canon because it established a template for German understanding of aesthetic and moral hierarchies and a standard for the creation of new hierarchies going forward. This same template, with transposition, became the standard for pre-McClary historical musicology and elitist metal fans: our music is serious and stands in contrast to a frivolous music that has appeals to a morally inferior but financially powerful other.[75] For the Germans this was the French, for pre-McClarian musicologists this was popular music, and for elitist metal fans this is the abject subgenres.

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[73] Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. by Michael Schröter, trans. and with a preface by Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell (New York: Colombia University, 1996), 322.
[74] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 73–74.
[75] I use McClary here as a shorthand for the shift that happened as a result of the New Musicology that used disciplinary reflexive criticism in an effort to expand the boundaries of musicology.

While Applegate believes that nationalism was "a way of ordering experience, of looking at the world and making sense of one's place and identity," Lydia Goehr emphasizes the darker aspects that accompanied German canon and identity building. She points to Wagner's essay 'Was ist deutsch,' which

> opens with the anxious observation that it is only the Germans, who in their insecurity, have constantly to repeat their own name with reverence: *deutsche Tiefe* (depth), *deutscher Ernst* (seriousness), *deutsche Treue* (fidelity). Why do they do this? Because of their lack of success in reestablishing themselves, in suitably modern form, as the Holy Roman Empire they once were.[76]

In the above examples we see the positive and negative sides of identity formation. Whereas identity allows a community to rally and support itself and its cultural production, it also allows a community to seek a return to an imagined past greatness that creates feelings of superiority against imagined "others."

Goehr argues that the Congress of Vienna, which redistributed Europe in 1814 after the Napoleonic wars, created an environment in which debates about the canon were less about the quality of art and more about anxieties in the face of emergent nationhood.

> In the early stages of Germany's move toward nationhood (officially established in 1871), it was obvious that its history of composers would be separated (more or less) from the French, Italian, or any other "foreign" lineage. However, the separation assumed a terrorist character precisely when the elected works came to be identified with the music's essence, truth, and sole future. . . . The point does not rest with the banal claim that canonizing works, like nationalizing peoples, cannot track its grouping tendencies without threatening to repress its opposition. The point is rather to emphasize, at the extreme, the fact of repression, the generation of an illusion of comfortable inclusion that masks the suffering of exclusions.[77]

Goehr describes the repression of the frivolous other from the canon as having a terrorist character. This is a bold claim. In the previous chapter I mention that Walser used "terrorism" to

[76] Applegate, "How German Is It," 281; Lydia Goehr, "In the Shadow of the Canon," *The Musical Quarterly* 86 (2002): 317.
[77] Goehr, "In the Shadow," 308–14.

describe the work of the PMRC that aimed to suppress freedom of expression.[78] When this mode of thought is extended to metal elitists, the exclusion of abject subgenres is somewhere on the terrorist spectrum. This again points to the curious nature of the second canon: on one hand it claims to belong to the tradition that was oppressed by the PMRC, and on the other hand it perpetuates a similar exclusionary behavior as a means of maintaining power.

Thus we see commonalities in the nineteenth-century German and musicological examples that carry over into the second metal studies canon: a culture experiencing fear or anxiety about the value of one of their treasured cultural products, an intellectual community participating in the defense of the cultural product, and an exclusionary practice seeking to covertly maintain the power of the community under attack (real or imagined) by asserting its seriousness against frivolity. These commonalities define the motivation, defenses, and attacks that constitute serious behavior in the elitist extreme metal community. In what follows I will analyze examples of metal studies work to further demonstrate the intellectual tradition of seriousness in which metal studies falls.

Second Canon Seriousness

As we have seen in the previous chapter, both Walser and Weinstein situated themselves and their work against those who would defame metal. Whether attacks came from conservative society, liberal rock journalism, or even the academy itself, studying metal music necessitated defending it against certain stigma and affirming that it was worth studying for reasons that were related to academic epistemological values. Weinstein, creator of objective knowledge in the face of societal misunderstanding, sought to correct false and dangerous ideas circulating in high

[78] Walser, "Professing Censorship," 69.

places in society. Walser, fan of the music in a constructed, post-modern world, argued that metal had substance *and* moral problems, and in doing so showed his self-awareness as a critically oriented metal aca-fan. Though they were resisting societal norms by advocating positively for metal music and culture during the moral panic brought on by the PMRC, they were maintaining norms of the academy and of intellectual work more broadly through both their epistemologies and methodologies (though Walser was pushing musicological boundaries). And Weinstein, despite her disciplinary objectivity, established lite metal as an unserious, frivolous other to classic and underground forms of metal. These defenses and academic conventions established the boundaries of seriousness in the first metal studies canon.

The brand of seriousness found in the second canon, descended from the first but departing in its extreme connoisseurship, can be shown in two ways. First, I show seriousness in the second canon through analysis of its music, where we see the shift in focus from metal across the lite-to-extreme spectrum to almost exclusively extreme metal. I will show this transition through a similar table to that provided in the chapter on the first canon. Second, I elucidate the manner of academic arguments used by scholars in this canon. As mentioned above, the extreme metal scholar-connoisseurs participated in the defense of metal as handed to them by the first canon. They also sought to position extreme metal as worthy of study by showing how it possessed or promoted the epistemological and moral values of their relevant interpretive communities within the academy.[79] Unlike the members of the extreme metal community broadly, metal studies scholars of the second canon tend not to overtly malign frivolous metal. However, the musical examples seen in the table make it clear that they make no effort to include abject subgenres except to use them as examples of what is not extreme.

[79] For more in interpretive communities, see Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class*.

The Music of the Serious Extreme Metal Canon

As in the previous chapter, I have created a table to demonstrate the content and biases of the second canon. The bands and albums listed in Table 3.1 comprise selections from Kahn-Harris's discography, and the table reflects the chronological progression from the first canon through its inclusion of numerous albums from the 2000s.[80] The table has two rows: the first is for bands and albums that were included in the previous chapter in Table 2.1, and the second is for bands and albums not found in Table 2.1. Table 3.1 largely borrows the columns from Table 2.1, though I have added a new column for "post-lite" abject bands from the nü metal, symphonic metal, power metal, and metalcore subgenres. Though many of the albums included in Table 3.1 were also included in Table 2.1, Kahn-Harris sometimes chose different albums for the same bands seen in the first canon. I include instances of "same band, different album" in the row that reflects overlap with Table 2.1.

The takeaways from this table are several:

1. There is overlap between the first and second canons that shows the second associates itself with the first. This reflects the extreme metal elitists' belief that they are part of the legacy of defending metal that began with the first canon.
2. There are far fewer bands from the classic metal, lite metal, and thrash metal categories. The vast majority of those included were found in both Walser and Weinstein's lists.
3. There is a significant addition of extreme metal bands.[81]
4. The inclusion of "post-lite" abject bands reflects the creation of the abject category that bolsters the seriousness of extreme metal.

Overall Table 3.1 shows a canon that is constructed to strengthen the core arguments of the serious extreme metal canonizers. Kahn-Harris trims bands outside the extreme/abject binary significantly, leaving only those needed to justify the shared lineage between the first and second canons. The inclusion of far more extreme metal bands presents extreme metal as flourishing and

[80] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 179–81.
[81] I did not include all of the extreme metal bands in Kahn-Harris's canon. It would have lengthened both the first and second rows.

diverse. The second canon is streamlined to win arguments by focusing on the types of heavy metal that matter to the argument.

The fourth point on my list is particularly interesting and recalls my discussion of Guillory in the first chapter, where he argues that including "non-canonic" works does not dismantle a canon "because every construction of a syllabus *institutes* once again the process of canon formation."[82] Whereas in the 1990s literary canon Guillory shows marginalized works were introduced in an effort to disrupt the non-pluralist center of the canon, in the second canon we see the opposite side of the phenomenon of the reforming canon. Rather than being radical and disruptive, the abject bands were kept in the canon to affirm extreme metal's seriousness by maintaining a binary hierarchy between the serious and the frivolous. The parallel to this in the broader metal world is the open denunciation of abject subgenres, which effectively keeps these abject bands in metal discourse but only as symbols of frivolity. Kahn-Harris says that "the majority of extreme metal scene members are extraordinarily vehement in their denunciation of nü metal. Nü metal has become an 'other' against which subcultural capital can be claimed."[83] When paired alongside the vestiges of the first canon, we see the conflicting nature of the second canon, in which it both defends metal and rejects or marginalizes those parts that does not suit its aesthetic preferences and academic arguments. The equation of seriousness with underground and extreme forms of metal in metal studies that began with Weinstein in the first canon matures with the second canon.

[82] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 31.
[83] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 135.

Table 3.1: Selected Works from Kahn Harris's Discography

Author	Lite Metal/Hard Rock	Classic "Heavy" Metal	Post-Lite Abject	NWOBHM and Thrash	Extreme
Kahn-Harris and Table 2.1	Mötley Crüe, *Shout at the Devil* (1983) Ozzy Osbourne, *Blizzard of Ozz* (1980) Poison, *Look What the Cat Dragged In* (1986)	Black Sabbath, *Paranoid* (1970) Judas Priest, *Stained Class* (1978) Led Zeppelin, *ZOSO [IV]* (1971)		Iron Maiden, *The Number of the Beast* (1982) Megadeth, *Peace Sells . . . But Who's Buying? (1986)* Metallica, *Kill Em' All* (1983) Saxon, *Denim and Leather* (1981) Slayer, *Show No Mercy* (1983)	Cannibal Corpse, *Butchered at Birth* (1991) Celtic Frost, *Into the Pandemonium* (1987) Cradle of Filth, *Cruelty and the Beast* (1998) Deicide, *Deicide* (1990) Dimmu Borgir, *Enthrone Darkness Triumphant (1997)* Morbid Angel, *Altars of Madness* (1989) Napalm Death, *Scum* (1987) Obituary, *Cause of Death* (1990) Possessed, *Seven Churches* (1985) Venom, *Black Metal* (1982)
Kahn-Harris and not Table 2.1			Helloween, *Keeper of the Seven Keys* (1987) Killswitch Engage, *The End of Heartache* (2004) Korn, *Life is Peachy* (1996) Limp Bizkit, *Chocolate Starfish and Hot Dog Flavored Water (2000)* Nightwish, *Once* (2004)	Sodom, *Agent Orange* (1989)	Agoraphobic Nosebleed, *Frozen Corpse Stuffed with Dope*, 2002 Arch Enemy, *Doomsday Machine*, 2005 Burzum, *Hvist Lyset Tar Os* (1992) Darkthrone, *Transylvanian Hunger* (1994) Dillinger Escape Plan, *Calculating Infinity* Immortal, *At the Heart of Winter* (1999) Marduk, *Panzer Division* (1999)

Table 3.1: Selected Works from Kahn Harris's Discography (cont.)

Author	Lite Metal/Hard Rock	Classic "Heavy" Metal	Post-Lite Abject	NWOBHM and Thrash	Extreme
					Mayhem, *De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas* (1994) Nile, *Black Seeds of Vengeance* (2000) Opeth, *My Arms, Your Hearse* (1999) Repulsion, *Horrified* (1989) SunnO))), *White 1* (2003) The Haunted, *The Haunted* (1998) Unleashed, *Across the Open Sea* (1993)

But what does abjection sound like?

To compliment the analysis done in my Chapter 2, I will analyze nü metal band Korn's 1998 song "Freak on a Leash." The song is unquestionably abject by Smialek's standards as Korn are understood to be "the quintessential nü metal band."[84] Korn's popularity, which contributes to its abject status, is also unquestionable: the album *Follow the Leader*, which contains "Freak on a Leash," is certified five times Platinum.[85] The MTV show *Total Request Live*, which from 1998 to 2008 played the top ten music videos of the day based on audience requests over phone or the internet, chose to "retire" the video for "Freak on a Leash" because of its persistence at the top of the charts.[86] Korn were chosen as one of the marquee bands at the infamous Woodstock '99 music festival.[87] The band is significant in metal history, but gets little scholarly treatment in metal studies due to its abject status.

Jonathan Pieslak outlines the stylistic markers of nü metal, saying the music is characterized by a number of facets including "aggressive, rap-influenced, angst-ridden, and pitched yelling vocals; hip-hop style beats or drum samples; and heavily distorted, detuned guitars playing largely syncopated, riff-based music with a distinct absence of solos and overt displays of instrumental virtuosity."[88] The hip hop influence heard in the vocals and drums is cited by Smialek as one of the main reasons why nü metal is so marginalized in the extreme metal canon.[89] But the influence of hip hop on the vocals in "Freak on a Leash" is not as

[84] Jonathan Pieslak, "Sound, Text, and Identity in Korn's 'Hey Daddy,'" *Popular Music* 27 (2008): 36.
[85] Follow the Leader" searched at RIAA Gold and Platinum, accessed 1/30/2023, https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&se=follow+the+leader#search_section.
[86] See NM Mashurov, "The Definitive Oral History of Korn's 'Freak on a Leash,'" *Fader*, accessed 1/30/2023, https://www.thefader.com/2018/08/14/korn-freak-leash-oral-history, where lead singer Jonathan Davis says "The TRL retirement home is because of us. We were the first band to be retired because our video would not get out."
[87] Merlin Alderslade, "Korn's Jonathan Davis Opens up on the Chaos of Woodstock '99: 'When You See It with Your Own Eyes, It Is Ten Times More Shocking,'" *Metal Hammer*, August 4, 2022, https://www.loudersound.com/news/korn-woodstock-99-interview.
[88] Pieslak, "Sound, Text, and Identity in Korn's 'Hey Daddy,'" 38.
[89] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," vii.

apparent as it is in other nü metal songs: the verses are sung and the choruses use the "pitched yelling" mentioned by Pieslak that is comparable to the false chord screaming used by Corey Taylor of Slipknot in the chorus of the song "Spit it Out."[90] Vocals that might be interpreted as influenced by hip hop enter the track at two minutes and thirty-eight seconds, when vocalist Jonathan Davis begins a section where he uses what he calls "heavy scatting." The technique of heavy scatting involves rhythmically scream-rapping a combination of disjointed words, utterances, and grunts. Since the vocals in this section are not sung, the most obvious way they would be understood in popular music of the late 1990s is as rapping. But Davis speaks about them primarily as percussive scatting, which would imply jazz influence.

> Everybody made a bajillion memes about the "mmbop da mmbob da nena." That's just purely heavy scatting, I just felt like some percussive shit. I did that on *Life is Peachy* when I did "Twist," that was really the heavy scat. I was beatboxing because I love to beatbox.[91]

Because he calls what he was doing beatboxing, a vocal percussion technique used primarily in hip hop music, we can say the vocals draw on hip hop. However, it is far different from the intentional rapping done by Taylor of Slipknot in the verses of "Spit it Out," for instance.

The detuned guitars are by far the lowest-pitched of any example I have presented so far because the song is performed on two seven-string Ibanez guitars that feature low B strings (a fourth below the traditional low E string used in "Back in Black" and "Crazy Train"). Korn then tunes their guitars down a whole step so that the lowest string is pitched on the A found a fifth below the traditional low E. The extended low range of the guitars is most pronounced at three-minutes-and-six-seconds into the song, when a chromatic, syncopated riff of B^5 - C^5 - $C\#^5$ - D^5 plays during the second half of Davis's "heavy scatting" vocal section.[92] Korn plays their seven-

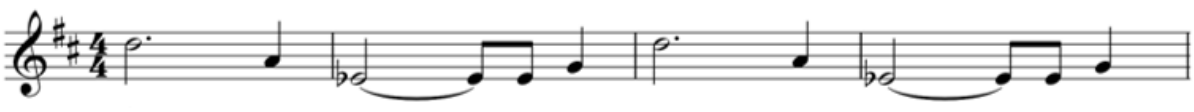
[90] See Chapter 2 for more on screaming techniques.
[91] Mashurov, "The Definitive Oral History of Korn's 'Freak on a Leash.'"
[92] Alderslade, "Korn's Jonathan Davis Opens Up."

string guitars into 150-watt Mesa Boogie Triple Rectifiers, amps known for their ability to produce the levels of overdrive found in tracks similar to Cannibal Corpse's "Butchered at Birth" as discussed in Chapter 2.[93]

"Freak on a Leash" begins on a D-A-Eb riff played high up on the necks of the two guitars, shown in Example 3.1. The riff unfolds more slowly than in previous examples, having notes sustained over several beats rather than the more common eighth or sixteenth-note riffs seen in Chapter 2, and it is made sonically eerie and unstable by the addition of delay, reverb, and chorus set with aggressive pitch modulation. The same collection of effects is applied selectively to the vocals during the second and third verse. After the first verse, a "response" is added. The lyrics shown below not in parentheses are at the fore of the texture, and the lyrics in parentheses are the response vocals that recede into the background and have the eerie effects applied.

> Feeling like a freak on a leash (you wanna see the light)
> Feeling like I have no release (so do I)
> How many times have I felt diseased (you wanna see the light)
> Nothing in my life is free, is free

The application of effects to the response vocals gives the impression that the response is in the mind of the lead singer, and that the disease he refers to in the third line is a form of mental illness that makes him hear voices.

Example 3.1: "Freak on a Leash" Riff

[93] John Bolinger, "Rig Rundown: Korn," *Premier Guitar*, December 13, 2013, https://www.premierguitar.com/gear/rig-rundown-korn.

In the chorus the bassist Fieldy uses slapping, a technique of striking the strings with the knuckle on the side of the thumb, to play along with the bass drum and snare groove created by drummer David Silveira. Though in the recording this slap bass technique is blended into the drum texture in a way that might make some listeners miss it, it is striking because of its associations with funk music like Sly and the Family Stone's "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)" or the funk rock group the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Given that hip hop's earliest beats were constructed from 1970s black popular music like funk and disco, the technique is not stylistically out of place in hip-hop-inspired nü metal. And Fieldy slaps in a way that fits both funk and metal; he primarily slaps the lowest open string, which resembles the technique of chugging discussed in Chapter 2 for its focus on the lowest open string. Despite its appropriateness, the slap bass contributes strongly to the abjectness of the track because it signifies groove-based music.

The music is truly held together by the drumming of Silveira, whose grooves fall outside the binary from the first canon of the straightforward rock beats of AC/DC on one end and the double-bass-style drumming found in thrash and extreme metal on the other. Silveira's use of ride cymbal to mark the pre-chorus one minute into the track is evocative of jazz soloing, as he stops using the snare and bass drum to mark tempo and instead decorates the texture. Five seconds later he brings in a descending tom tom beat to accompany the ride cymbal, thickening the texture and driving us into the chorus that features even more tom-based groove.

Though it utilizes sounds and techniques that signify metal heaviness, Korn's "Freak on a Leash" borrows conspicuously from other styles of music. This stylistic borrowing is interpreted by extreme metal fans as moral frivolousness; in their eyes, the mixture of styles is an indication that Korn is not completely metal now and may someday abandon metal entirely for other styles

of music. The stigma of frivolousness, in combination with the belief that nü metal lyrics reflect adolescent angst (recall that rock journalists too condemned metal for its appeal to adolescents), predestines "Freak on a Leash" to inhabit the catacombs of abjection.[94]

Second Canon Seriousness through Academic Arguments: Kahn-Harris

Kahn-Harris, reflecting on Weinstein's dichotomy between lite metal and more serious forms, points out that Weinstein uses the term "fundamentalism" to describe the thrash and speed metal reactions to hair metal. Kahn-Harris notes that "fundamentalism implies a disgust at decadence . . . and a desire to return to a perceived prior state of purity." Given that "thrash engendered a variety of ever more radical extreme metal genres," extreme metal is presented by Kahn-Harris as a fundamentalist reaction to the excesses of hair metal.[95] This fundamentalism, in contrast to a hedonist other, is a manner of projecting moral seriousness, and it reinforces the serious/frivolous binary between extreme metal and hair metal.

In his defense of studying extreme metal, Kahn-Harris shows awareness of the serious/frivolous binary not only in the metal world but also in the academy.

> Eyebrows are often raised when I tell strangers about my research. As with research on other forms of popular music, it is sometimes seen as a frivolous pursuit. Yet there are a number of reasons why extreme metal is a significant phenomenon.[96]

Here Kahn-Harris points to extreme metal as abject in the academy because it is a "popular music," a term that, for large stretches of musicological history, denoted frivolousness in contrast to serious art music. Yet several years after the publication of his influential work, extreme metal

[94] On the rejection of adolescence by extreme metal fans, see Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," especially Chapter 2, "Extreme Metal and its Others: Metal Audiences' Hostility Towards Adolescence," 65–114. In metal of the first canon, see my Chapter 2.
[95] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 2-3. Remember also that Kahn-Harris uses "fundamentalism" to describe extreme metal discourses, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter.
[96] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 6.

became central to metal studies, which pushed the study of non-extreme metal even further into frivolousness. We see in this discourse the ability of extreme metal advocates to position themselves as defending the music from dissenters while simultaneously marginalizing abject forms of metal.

Though Kahn-Harris goes to great pains to distance himself from extreme metal's most violent and hateful transgressions, he participates in the extreme metal musical fundamentalism he documents.[97] In his critical blog post "Invisible Metal," he says that

> in the past, metal scenes had shape and movement. They changed and evolved at a pace that was manageable and discernible. . . . In today's age of abundance, nothing ever becomes truly obsolete. Artists and styles that would once have faded away can survive and thrive in niches. The lack of barriers to entry into the scene have resulted in an endless flood of new releases that even the most assiduous of critics find difficult to organise. . . . None of this means that there isn't still great music being made, or that metal is artistically dead. The problem is that without a discernible shape or movement to metal, the impact of new releases becomes dissipated. Many of the most canonical works of metal were canonised because they appeared at the crest of a stylistic wave, because they both exemplified and catalysed something that was emergent.[98]

Here we see Kahn-Harris's desire to return to a metal purity, a desire that is more likely the result of his growing accustomed to metal than to any lack of exciting artistic developments in the myriad niches he acknowledges but renders frivolous just as quickly. His stance is akin to someone in the Western art canon discussing a progression toward musical modernism, but then saying the most modern music was created in the mid-twentieth century by the likes of Stockhausen, Boulez, and Babbitt (or, worse, Schoenberg and Webern earlier in the century). Whether the modernity be of the Western-art or metal variety, what is clear is that "progress"

[97] Regarding his distancing himself from extreme transgressiveness, see the passage from Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 5 that I cite in footnote 37 of Chapter 1.
[98] Keith Kahn-Harris, "Invisible Metal," *Souciant*, December 6, 2013, http://souciant.media/2013/12/invisible-metal/.

here is, like analysis, a tool for promoting the preferences of the critic, rather than a way of describing the historical and cultural forces that cause musical output to change and diversify.

Though his major academic contributions to metal studies are sociological concepts like mundane and transgressive subcultural capital, Kahn-Harris presents himself as a descendant of the analyst-critics in *Extreme Metal*. He does this when recounting his personal discovery of extreme metal, emphasizing how he was attracted to the music for its being complex and challenging.

> Sometime in 1987 I tuned into BBC Radio 1's John Peel show and heard a sound that was to change my life: short, incomprehensible bursts of unlistenable guitar noise overlaid with a series of brutal grunts. The sound was utterly different from anything that I had ever heard before, completely bewildering yet at the same time strangely compelling. The band I heard was Napalm Death and in subsequent months Peel was to play other, similarly extraordinary bands such as Carcass and Bolt Thrower. This exposure to pioneering UK grindcore bands led me to completely re-evaluate my feelings about metal, which save for a brief flirtation in the early 1980s, were largely negative. As a consequence I discovered the burgeoning death metal scene, which instantly fascinated me just as grindcore did.[99]

We see in the above a strong and positive reaction to "bewildering" and "compelling" grunts and bursts of noise that "fascinated" Kahn-Harris the metal intellectual. The critic has valorized a set of serious musical traits that distinguish this music from the frivolous metal music of the 1980s. That extreme metal is complex and challenging is not merely implied, as this passage comes as a reflection after Kahn-Harris provides an overview of the extreme metal landscape that relies on description of the music. Illuminating the origins of death metal, he says that, for bands like Death and Possessed, "vocals became less and less intelligible, songwriting became more complex and guitar 'riffs' (chord sequences) sounded increasingly austere and 'dark.'" He offers descriptions of grindcore bands The Dillinger Escape Plan and Agoraphobic Nosebleed that "have developed avant-garde versions of the genre incorporating frequent time signature changes

[99] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 5.

and complex sounds that at times recall free jazz."[100] He uses the word "complex" twice in these passages to describe features of death metal and grindcore, and his mentions of unintelligible vocals and the avant-garde point to the challenging nature of the music. While far short of the analysis of the likes Kerman described in terms of rigor and complexity, Kahn-Harris is still relying on descriptions of musical characteristics to justify the study of metal and to promote the aesthetic hierarchies of the second canon. There is a difference in quality, but not in intent.

As a side note, the musical complexity of extreme metal has been analyzed in greater depth by music theorists, with Meshuggah serving as the model band for this purpose. Pieslak and Guy Capuzzo present ways that Meshuggah's complex and non-standard use of rhythm differentiates them from other metal bands, lending to their canonizability in the second canon.[101] Calder Hannan argues that the extreme metric malleability and non-metricism presented by Meshuggah and The Dillinger Escape Plan, respectively, increase the heaviness of the music through sonic metaphors that include size, power, transgression, and seriousness. [102] This work compliments Kahn-Harris's in that it locates the interest of much extreme metal music in its complexity, and points to how that contributes to the perceived seriousness of the music.

Second Canon Seriousness through Academic Arguments: Hideous Gnosis

The seriousness of the second metal studies canon becomes particularly interesting at the point where its aesthetic and moral values come into conflict with the values of the International

[100] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 3–4. I note that I completely disagree with his definition of riffs as chord progressions, for reasons including that riffs can happen while no chords are progressing (Aerosmith "Walk this Way") or where the music is atonal (see my analysis of Cannibal Corpse's "Butchered at Birth" in the previous chapter).
[101] Jonathan Pieslak, "Re-casting Metal: Rhythm and Meter in the Music of Meshuggah," *Music Theory Spectrum* 29 (2007): 219–45; Guy Capuzzo, "Rhythmic Deviance in the Music of Meshuggah," *Music Theory Spectrum* 40 (2018): 121–37.
[102] Calder Hannan, "Difficulty as Heaviness: Links Between Rhythmic Difficulty and Perceived Heaviness in the Music of Meshuggah and The Dillinger Escape Plan," *Metal Music Studies* 4 (2018): 433–58.

Society for Metal Music Studies.[103] As mentioned in the first chapter, this negotiation between elitism and egalitarianism is normally accomplished through an ambivalent acknowledgement that "the music is good and the politics are bad." However, returning to the contributions published in *Hideous Gnosis* reveals two things. First, the scholars at the Hideous Gnosis conference believed that the black metal theory they were presenting—not so much a politics as a manner of being in the world—was good, like the music. Second, the scholars of the second metal studies canon, be they ambivalent or defenders of extreme metal's extramusical elements, still operate alongside those fans who are non-egalitarians at best and openly hateful and discriminatory at worst.

The intellectuals of Hideous Gnosis defended black metal from perceived outsiders who thought the music lacked value due to its associations with violence and hatred. Conference presenters showed how black metal, by promoting a form of transcendence through the chaos and violence of the music, allowed fans to become something approaching Nietzschean "Übermenschen" with radical freedom of speech that brought power and allowed for resisting oppression. As mentioned earlier, this was combined with critical theory and continental philosophy to create a particular flavor of academic seriousness that pervades the conference publication.

In the paper "Black Confessions and Absu-lution," Niall Scott spoke about black metal theory as a phenomenon that resembles and resists Catholic confession through its focus on prohibited forms of behavior and censorship in the form of "closed" (non-public) confession of sins.[104]

> Instead of the power of prohibition and censorship, Black Metal Theory serves to increase and expand more and more on that which has been forbidden. Thus we can

[103] For more on the values of the ISMMS, see my first chapter and "Full Statement of Antidiscrimination."
[104] Niall Scott and Sin Eater, "Black Confessions and Absu-lution," in *Hideous Gnosis*, 221–231.

> locate and understand the same thing of the venting of anti-Christian or even antireligious sentiments in Black Metal's early years.[105]

Scott argues that black metal theory frees us from the restrictive censorship of Catholic confession, and in doing so opens discourse to a more radical freedom of expression.

To strengthen his argument based on the epistemological needs of his interpretive community, Scott relates his perception of the discursive freedom brought by black metal theory to continental philosophy on the power of language as it pertains to the act of confession.

> The black metal event, the scene, the movement, persists in dealing with the misery of the human condition where Christianity gave it over to be privatised, individualised and removed from the public sphere into the confession box where one is neither alive nor dead, but suspended surrendering control. This is surrendered to give way; to gain either priestly control over people or to hide misery in the secrets [sic] sphere of the soul. This is as much a control over the power of language as the power over souls. As Michel Foucault tells us in *The History of Sexuality*, that which is confessed—confession of that which has become secret and forbidden moves from the act of confession to becoming discourse. Desire is transformed into discourse, but the language used neutralises the content of which the confession refers to. Derrida agrees with this point regarding language neutralising the event.[106]

The relative privacy of Catholic confession erases the power of the confessing act by rendering it secret or under the control of the priest who heard it. To create black metal music, or maybe more fundamentally to "do black metal" in the way this conference theorizes about, is to confess one's sins and to gain power from the freedom to do so. For Scott, black metal theory is a radical form of liberation and self-empowerment for all who embrace it.

The theme of black metal as radical freedom continues in Aspasia Stephanou's "Playing Wolves and Red Riding Hood in Black Metal." Borrowing language directly from Deleuze and Guattari's *1000 Plateaus* and *Anti-Oedipus*, works that comically resist the Freudian analytic tradition, Stephanou says that

[105] Scott and Eater, "Black Confessions and Absu-lution," 224–25.
[106] Scott and Eater, "Black Confessions and Absu-lution," 223–24.

> in Black Metal the symbol of the wolf and the becoming animal of Deleuze and Guattari are metamorphosed into gothic monsters multiplying and infecting with their contagious proliferations the dark of night. In Angela Carter's story wolves are assassins and the wolfsong is a murdering. Black metal glorifies the becoming-werewolf and werewolf nomadism characterised by aggression, speed and violence. The lycanthropic entities that are conjured up in black metal's lyrics along with the becoming-animal of the voice, demand from the listener a certain kind of response. Between a state of orgasmic pleasure and jouissance emanating from the performative space of radical otherness, and the horrors of hollowing up the body and transgressing its boundaries through the speed of sound, black metal is a monstrous desiring machine.[107]

Stephanou's analysis of black metal says that the music's aggressive speed and radical transgression create a space for behavior that resists the normal modes of being in society. As the references to wolves are clear allusions to Freud's work with the "wolf man," the references to orgasmic pleasure are somewhat literal. Stephanou says, "Black metal is becoming wolf, embracing carnal desires, animal transformations, and violent instincts."[108] This mode of behavior she outlines offers a similar radical freedom to that discussed above by Scott. But again, in 2009 there was no threat to black metal's freedom of expression that matched the broad threat of the PMRC.

My criticisms of black metal theory are not meant to affirm or deny the moral acceptability of Satanism or Christianity. The standard for assessing the value of an approach to morality in metal studies should be whether it meets the egalitarian standards of the ISMMS. Andrew Thomson shows how a trio of bands he dubs "The New Satanists"—Ghost, Twin Temple, and Zeal & Ardor—use Satan and Satanism to critique things like unjust patriarchy and the conversion of African slaves to Christianity.[109] I further do not wish to imply that black metal is left uncritiqued in metal music studies; Kahn-Harris points out, among other instances of

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[107] Aspasia Stephanou, "Playing Wolves and Red Riding Hood in Black Metal," in *Hideous Gnosis: Black Metal Theory Symposium 1*, ed. Nicola Masciandaro (N.P: blackmetaltheory.blogspot.com, 2010), 158–159.
[108] Stephanou, "Playing Wolves," 159–60.
[109] Andrew Thomson, "Right Hand Up, Left Hand Down: The New Satanists of Rock N' Roll, Evil, and the Underground War on the Abject," *Metal Music Studies* 7 (2021): 43–60.

extreme metal immorality throughout his work, that there is overt prejudice toward Israeli scene members.

> Since the rise of the black metal scene and the concomitant flirtation with far-right discourses, Israelis have faced open hostility on occasions. Some northern European distros have refused to deal with Israeli bands, distros, and labels, sometimes on the grounds that they are "unreliable." Some Israeli bands have received hate mail. The most extreme example of this was in 1991, when a prominent Israeli scene member received a letter bomb that is reputed to have been sent by Varg Vikernes. In scenic conflict, members outside Israel will occasionally make anti-Semitic comments in order to anger Israeli scene members.[110]

My criticisms of black metal theory are meant to point out how a serious approach to extreme metal and its habitus are problematic because of the nature of seriousness and the manner in which seriousness is performed in extreme metal communities.

Conclusion: Hilarious "in a Bad Way"[111]

Despite what black metal theory might provide to any individual, the defense of black metal offered by black metal theorists is flawed. First, it lacks the immediacy and urgency that came with the attacks on metal during the PMRC Senate hearings; the United States Senate in 1985 had more influence over metal music than did the Catholic Church over black metal in 2009. Second, the position that radical freedom of expression is liberatory is not egalitarian but elitist, as it ignores the responsibility of an individual to communicate with their community in a way that respects the happiness and freedoms of all people involved. Scott may, with sincerity, propose that all can equally participate in and gain from the liberation brought by anti-Catholic, radical free speech. But I strongly suspect this theory would not hold in practice.

[110] Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 77.
[111] See footnote 8 in this chapter.

Black metal is presented by the scholars of the Hideous Gnosis conference as offering freedom of expression. In reality, it hosts people like the infamous Varg Vikernes, a man who was convicted of murder and church burning in the 1990s, and later for "inciting racial hatred" in a French court.[112] Some would assert all black metal is far-right politically: Benjamin Noys cites musician Sale Famine of the far-right band Peste Noire, who says

> to my mind, without being necessarily N[ational] S[ocialist], real Black Metal is always extreme right-wing music—be it from Asia or Latin America as extreme right politics are not the appanage of the white race—and it is always Satanic.[113]

With the above in mind, any effort to present black metal as egalitarian and in line with the views of the ISMMS seems to me to be either short-sighted or intentionally manipulative.

Thus, asserting that black metal is a space where people can better express the transgressive thoughts they repressed due to their Catholicism or neuroticism is not offered in conjunction with the lower-class, "interested seriousness" that reflects reality (per Bourdieu above). It is disinterested, upper-class, comprehensivist thought, and it represents the weird interests of the black metal theory community.[114] These papers are exercises in the creation of a particular form of academic cultural capital through Catholic critique and post-Freudian analysis, and nothing more.

Though most scholarship in the second canon is not black metal theory, the need for seriousness that defines this canon is ultimately its greatest weakness. The quest for seriousness is the reason for the second canon's exclusionary behavior, the reason it manipulates the history of metal in its favor, and the reason it canonizes the music of hateful people. This canonization

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[112] Dan Reilly, "Burzum's Varg Vikernes Found Guilty of 'Inciting Racial Hatred," *Spin*, July 10, 2014, https://www.spin.com/2014/07/varg-vikernes-guilty-inciting-racial-hatred/
[113] Benjamin Noys, "'Remain True to the Earth!': Remarks on the Politics of Black Metal," in *Hideous Gnosis*, 108.
[114] For more on weirdness, see Phil Ford and J.F. Martel's *Weird Studies* podcast accessed 10/26/2022, https://www.weirdstudies.com/.

does not equate to a universal support for the behavior of metal extremists; if anything, the opposite is true in scholarship, given the prevalence of ambivalent positions like that of Kahn-Harris. However, critiques of extreme metal culture perpetuate the second canon because the hateful bands continue to be canonized through their inclusion in scholarship.

Chapter 4

The Third Canon: Global Metal, Resistance, and Preservation

In the 2019 documentary *Songs of Injustice: Heavy Metal in Latin America*, radio host Pepe Pesante interviews Professor Nelson Varas-Díaz about the research he and his team were conducting on Latin American metal. Varas-Díaz takes the opportunity to explain his motivations and epistemological frameworks:

> We understand that metal music is a reflection of the context of each country in Latin America. Understanding how metal came to be and what it does in each of these places is a way of coming closer to understanding the region. Very frequently people ask me "what does metal in Latin America sound like?" And that is an important question, but it is not enough. I think that an accompanying question should be, "What is metal in Latin America saying?" "What is the message that this music is trying to spread in the region?"[1]

When Pesante asks, "What is metal in Latin America saying?," Varas-Díaz responds, "Well, many things. Still, I think it's important to highlight that it is chronicling the injustices experienced in the region. It's the history of Latin America; of repression in Latin America."[2] Varas-Díaz then demonstrates this history of oppression by presenting examples that highlight the consequences of fifteenth-century colonialism and its impact on indigenous peoples, twentieth-century dictatorships and the repression of those who resisted them, and present-day neoliberalism that turns natural resources into commodities for private profit.[3] He closes by saying that "Metal fans tell that story in a very reflexive, different, and regional manner. I think that makes metal music in the region worthy of being explored."[4]

[1] Varas-Díaz, dir., "Songs of Injustice," 1:58.
[2] Varas-Díaz, dir., "Songs of Injustice," 2:31.
[3] Varas-Díaz, dir., "Songs of Injustice," 2:44.
[4] Varas-Díaz, dir., "Songs of Injustice," 3:22.

The above passage states definitively that Latin American metal focuses on local and regional injustices suffered by oppressed people, such as indigenous populations, in a way that demonstrates reflexive awareness of their actions and their identity. However, the documentary later demonstrates that Latin American metal bands choose to talk about topics outside of political injustice and oppression. Eloy Arturo of the regionally influential Peruvian band Kranium acknowledges the existence of apolitical Latin American metal when he speaks about why his band chose to emphasize local and regional politics over other lyrical topics.

> Our lyrics reflect what is happening in our country and in the rest of the Americas. We want to reach the Americas, not only Peru. Let's stop playing around! Some metal bands sing about superficial things or legends. Even worse, some sang about legends from other countries. It's not our history. Some continued to do so, and it's OK. I can respect that. Black metal, for example. But with what is happening in Peru how can you be singing about the devil?[5]

With this statement, Arturo creates a hierarchy of lyrical topics with local and regional politics at the top, local legends and "superficial things" under this, and at the bottom legends *not* from Peru. This demonstrates a different form of seriousness than seen in the second canon, one whose aim is to create broad relevance through presenting consequential political topics with a focus on what is authentically local.

While I applaud the artistic and activist efforts of Kranium and have no criticism to offer for what they do, I question why Varas-Díaz sought to portray all of Latin American metal as politically oriented, while Arturo pointed to unserious bands who sang about superficial topics or unauthentic, non-local legends. With the understanding that one cannot reasonably speak about every form of metal in Latin America in a one-hour-and-thirty-six-minute documentary, it does not seem necessary or accurate to suggest that all metal in a region does one thing when the foundational theory of heavy metal argues that the genre is diverse because the boundaries of the

[5] Varas-Díaz, dir., "Songs of Injustice," 11:45.

music are under constant contestation.[6] Based on the standards of seriousness established in the second metal studies canon, why not argue it was a "connoisseurship" of Peruvian metal that sang about serious political topics? After all, politically oriented, extreme music like hardcore punk tends be elitist and is far from popular.[7] Or why not provide statistics to show a more precise breakdown of lyrical topics in Peruvian metal from which to draw conclusions?

The third metal studies canon I analyze, which solidified a bit later in the 2000s than the second, posits that metal is "not bad" because metal culture is a global, marginalized community that resists the negative forces that oppress it.[8] This canon draws heavily on anthropological and ethnomusicological approaches toward music, including decentering Western cultures and using ethnographic methodologies. Unlike the second canon outlined in the previous chapter, the third canon strongly reflects the egalitarian values of the International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS).[9] Yet despite its egalitarian values, the third canon is still constructed primarily to win academic arguments and create capital for its canonizers. As stated in my introduction, these arguments need not be controversial or combative; arguments are the product of academic propositions and presentation of evidence done in lectures, paper presentations at conferences, and in published articles and books. Scholars of the third canon are doing good *and* reaping cultural capital.

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[6] See for instance Walser, *Running with the Devil*, 4. For further explanation, see my Chapter 1.
[7] For more on metal connoisseurship, see Allett, "The Extreme Metal 'Connoisseur,'" 167–81. For more on hardcore, see for instance Steve Waksman, *This Ain't the Summer of Love*.
[8] Though scholarship in the third canon may be perceived as thinking that metal is "good," Wallach, Berger, and Greene present their case for metal being "not bad" quite clearly. "Frequently misunderstood and maligned in its countries of origin, heavy metal music has in the last four decades become a potent source of meaning and identity for young and no-longer-so-young people across the planet. These fans have stayed loyal to the music despite societal disapproval, occasional moral panics, censorship, and even government harassment and violence. *Metal Rules the Globe* is the first academic book to explore the broad swath of metal's worldwide growth and examine why this often devalued, censored, and ridiculed music genre has attracted so many devoted fans in far-flung locates." "Affective Overdrive," 4.
[9] "Full Statement of Antidiscrimination."

Though I am a fan of scholarly work on this canon for its goal to unify and empower a marginalized community, I offer two points of criticism in an effort not to grow complacent with scholarship that I find to my taste. My first criticism is that resistance as a *concept* holds a cultural capital in the third canon that lends itself to uncritical valorization of the *practice* of resistance in the metal community. While resistance in metal can be found in opposition to any number of powerful forces on either side of the political spectrum, the third canon emphasizes the modes of resistance in which the resisters are the marginalized people defended by the egalitarian stances of the ISMMS. Drawing on John Guillory, I theorize how resistance in this canon relies on the false assumptions that canonization excludes historically marginalized communities in the same way they are excluded from political power. I use my Guillorian theory of resistance to challenge Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene's assertion that metal fans around the world resist political extremism. To illustrate my points, I show how the racism of black metal musician Varg Vikernes, whom I discussed in the previous chapter, is both a prominent example of political extremism in metal and is well-canonized due to capital that comes from writing about transgressive subject matter.

My second criticism of the third canon is that it presents metal music as folk music in a manner that allows for a defensive posture based in the preservationist practices of the disciplines of anthropology, folklore, and ethnomusicology. Global metal culture is often presented in a "folklorized" form as having been transmitted through underground, anti-capitalist means like tape trading and underground publications.[10] While metal has many underground scenes that can benefit from understanding them as behaving as folk music, I reiterate the point made in my first chapter that the defensive posture of metal studies began when metal was one of

[10] For more on tape trading and fanzines, see Kahn-Harris, *Extreme Metal*, 56–57, and Steve Waksman, "Metal/Punk Reformation: Three Independent Labels," in *This Ain't the Summer of Love*, 210–55.

the most financially successful forms of music on the planet. This revisionist portrayal of metal demonstrates the musical-political preferences of the scholars of this canon, and enables a defensive position of metal through associating its marginalization with other forms of marginalized folk musics. I illustrate this point through comparative analysis between metal scholarship and anthropologically inclined blues scholarship that venerates music from rural areas like the Mississippi Delta that was believed to have the most direct links to the origins of the blues and to its African ancestry.

I conclude the chapter by positing that increased reflexivity among scholars in this canon with regard to the preferences of their disciplines would benefit scholarship by allowing it to be honest about the place of progressive politics in metal. Misstating the existence of politics in a musical community is far more likely to benefit the scholar in terms of cultural capital than it will the community in terms of any form of capital this misrepresentation may bring. I draw parallels in this regard to the work of folklorist Lawrence Gellert, who in order to bolster his reputation likely fabricated political African American folk song in order to distinguish his collection of recordings from those of other folklorists. I stress that it is better to situate instances of political engagement in metal within the "mundane" truth of its general apoliticality.

The Music of the Third Canon

To continue the precedent from my two previous chapters of outlining a canon using representative scholarly works like those of Weinstein, Walser, and Kahn-Harris, I will outline the third canon using bands referenced in Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene's *Metal Rules the Globe*.[11] Wallach, Berger, and Greene's edited collection holds a place

[11] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, eds., *Metal Rules the Globe*.

of central importance to the third canon because it pioneered the theorization of the workings of the global metal community. Unlike the scholarly works used in previous chapters to demonstrate the first and second canons, *Metal Rules the Globe* has no discography or "best of" list to draw upon as the basis for a table.[12] The lack of a traditional canonizing list could be viewed as a problem, since canonization relies on such lists to provide a sense of the "imaginary totality" of the canon.[13] However, I do not see this lack as an issue. Given the egalitarian stance of the ISMMS, if *Metal Rules the Globe* were to contain a formal list that suggests some bands are better than others, the collection would appear to either be perpetuating the hierarchical "cores and peripheries" that the third canon seeks to resist or reversing the hierarchies of the first and second canons in a way that ignores the historical flows of power in metal.[14] Rather, *Metal Rules the Globe* indirectly creates its list through its table of contents, works cited, index, and pertinent mentions of bands in each chapter, avoiding the appearance of traditional canonization while still contributing to the third canon's imaginary totality. In categorizing and analyzing the bands mentioned throughout the book, it becomes clear that the third canon has a stylistic breadth that resembles the first canon in addition to a broadening of geographic coverage.

Table 4.1 is organized into two rows: the first shows bands canonized in *Metal Rules the Globe* that also appear in Table 2.1 and/or Table 3.1, and the second shows bands that are only canonized in *Metal Rules the Globe*. The column headings are drawn directly from Table 3.1.

[12] There are albums mentioned in the Works Cited but not enough to give a meaningful sense of the global metal canon on its own. See Wallach, Berger, and Greene, eds., "Works Cited," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 339–66. Further, their distribution of cited albums from band to band is uneven: the band Sepultura has 10 albums listed in the works cited, Black Sabbath and Metallica have one each, and Slayer and Cannibal Corpse have none. All of these bands are mentioned in *Metal Rules the Globe*.

[13] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 30 for instance. See my Chapter 1: Canonization and Cultural Capital in Metal Studies for more on this.

[14] For more on "cores and peripheries" in the global metal scene, see Keith Kahn-Harris, "'You Are from Israel and That Is Enough to Hate You Forever': Racism, Globalization, and Play within the Global Extreme Metal Scene," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 200.

Due to the lack of discography or other documents that list notable albums in *Metal Rules the Globe*, as well as the tendency in the collection for scholars to "name drop" bands as quick stylistic referents to help situate bands from "peripheral" metal scenes, there are fewer specific mentions of albums in *Metal Rules the Globe* than in Weinstein, Walser, and Kahn-Harris's works. Thus, I have removed albums from this table and replaced them with the nationalities of the bands. My inspiration to do this stems from the inclusion of nationalities in the index next to bands' names. This inclusion shows the epistemological weight of what Michelle Bigenho calls the "mapping" of musical cultures into geographical regions, a practice representative of the historical preferences of anthropology and ethnomusicology.[15] I will elaborate on Bigenho's concept later in this chapter.

Though the third canon resembles the first canon because it presents metal as stylistically broad through the inclusion of a great number of bands from non-extreme subgenres, it simultaneously houses a disproportionate number of extreme metal and thrash bands from the peripheries of the metal world in a way that reflects the bias toward extremity in metal studies since the 2000s and a desire to bring cultural capital to global metal. We see the tilt toward more extreme forms of metal in the two rightmost columns of the second row of Table 4.1, where bands from Malta, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brazil are added to those from Norway and the United Kingdom found in the first row in far greater number than the other columns. While scholars of the third canon do not seek to directly minimize the importance of what Eric T. Smialek calls "abject" subgenres, or those subgenres that are seen as extreme metal's frivolous

[15] Michelle Bigenho, "Why I'm Not an Ethnomusicologist: A View from Anthropology," in *The New (Ethno)Musicologies*, ed. Henry Stobart (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2008), 28–39.

"other," they still do so by demonstrating that the globalization of metal music has led to an outpouring of bands in the thrash and extreme metal categories.[16]

There is no simple way to summarize the musical styles found in the third canon due to the ability of bands to include elements of their local, regional, or national identity in their music. This ability to modify their music with diverse and ever-evolving elements of non-metal culture creates a significant new dimension in comparison to the first and second canons: bands can perform in a recognizable style of metal while adapting it with their cultural elements to create something both recognizable and potentially unique. Of course, some bands choose not to reflect these local, regional, and national identities in their music; the metal they produce is functionally the same as a band from a more central location in global metal such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Norway, and Sweden (barring technical aspects like recording quality or access to other expensive technologies). However, the inclusion of local cultural elements makes a song or band more attractive to scholars of the third canon because it allows them to reap additional cultural capital in third-canon scholarship due to the biases the of anthropological field, which disproportionately studies cultures viewed as outside of the centers of global power.

[16] For more on abject subgenres, see Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," especially Chapter 2, "Extreme Metal and its Others," 65–114. Regarding the prevalence of extreme metal in the global metal community, Kahn-Harris notes that the extreme metal scene is "perhaps the most globalized of metal cultures" in "'You Are from Israel,'" 200.

Table 4.1: Selected Bands from *Metal Rules the Globe*

Author	Lite Metal/Hard Rock	Classic "Heavy" Metal	Post-Lite Abject	NWOBHM and Thrash	Extreme
***Metal Rules the Globe* and Tables 2.1 and/or 3.1.**	Aerosmith (USA) Bon Jovi (USA) Def Leppard (UK) Guns N' Roses (USA) **Mötley Crüe (USA)** **Ozzy Osbourne (UK)** **Poison (USA)** Twisted Sister (USA) Van Halen (USA) Yngwie J. Malmsteen (Sweden)	AC/DC (Australia) **Black Sabbath (UK)** Deep Purple (UK) **Judas Priest (UK)** Kiss (USA) **Led Zeppelin (UK)**	Helloween (Germany) Korn (USA) Limp Bizkit (USA)	Anthrax (USA) **Iron Maiden (UK)** **Megadeth (USA)** **Metallica (USA)** Motörhead (UK) **Saxon (UK)** **Slayer (USA)**	Burzum (Norway) **Cannibal Corpse (USA)** **Celtic Frost (Switzerland)** **Cradle of Filth (UK)** Darkthrone (Norway) **Deicide (USA)** **Dimmu Borgir (Norway)** Mayhem (Norway) **Napalm Death (UK)** Opeth (Sweden) **Venom (UK)**
***Metal Rules the Globe* and not Tables 2.1 and 3.1**		Nomad Son (Malta) Pomaranča (Solvenia) Tang Dynasty (China) XPDC (Malaysia)	Angra (Brazil) Forsaken (Malta) Metakix (India) Norm Rejection (Malta) Orphaned Land (Israel)	Acrassicauda (Iraq) Criminal (Chile) Dorsal Atlântica (Brazil) FTG (Malaysia) Kemolorg (Malaysia) Overdose (Brazil) Pentagram (Turkey) Seringai (Indonesia) Vandals/X-Vandals (Malta) Witchhammer (Brazil)	Arallu (Israel) Bealiah (Indonesia) Beheaded (Malta) Bishop of Hexen (Israel) Demoniac (New Zealand) Impiety (Singapore) Kremation (Malta) Loathe (Malta) Martyrium (Malta) Noctiferia (Slovenia) Salem (Israel) Sceptocrypt (Malta) Sekarat (Indonesia) Slit (Malta) Slowdeath (Indonesia) Suffercation (Malaysia) Tengkorak (Indonesia) Ugrakarma (Indonesia) Vulcano (Brazil) Xenophobia (Slovenia)

Bolded bands above indicate they are in both Table 2.1 and 3.1

The Brazilian band Sepultura, which has achieved international recognition in the metal community and has two gold selling albums in *Chaos A. D.* (1993) and *Roots* (1996), is an example of a band that has chosen both to exclude and include musical elements from their culture in their music.[17] While early in their career they produced relatively straightforward death metal in order to be accepted in the global metal community, Idelber Avelar notes that Sepultura incorporated elements of Brazilian music into their albums beginning with *Chaos A. D.* and culminating in *Roots*. He analyzes the latter album's track, "Ratamahatta," and points to its inclusion of Afro-diasporic call and response lyrics focused on the poor conditions of the *favela* (the slums), the esteemed Bahian percussionist Carlinhos Brown, and recordings of the indigenous Xavante people Sepultura collected on a trip to a reservation in the state of Mato Grosso.[18] The inclusion of such cultural elements justifies the musical analysis in a book like *Metal Rules the Globe*, allowing Avelar to reap capital as a scholar of Latin American literature and Brazilian popular music.[19]

The Israeli extreme metal band Arallu makes use of lyrical content, imagery, and music that reflects life in the Holy Land. Kahn-Harris notes how the band, in the liner notes to their album *Satanic War in Jerusalem* (2002), challenges the centrality and authenticity of antisemitic Norwegian black metal bands by pointing out that "the devil came from the desert AND NOT from the forest."[20] The desert is significant in Arallu's music, as the band utilizes a number of timbres and instruments associated simultaneously with Israel and the broader Arab and Middle Eastern worlds due to connections between these regions that formed in the early twentieth

[17] "Sepultura" searched at RIAA Gold and Platinum, accessed 1/23/2023, https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&se=sepultura#search_section.
[18] Idelber Avelar, "Otherwise National: Locality and Power in the Art of Sepultura," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 146–47.
[19] For Avelar's bio, see "Contributors," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 367.
[20] Kahn-Harris, "You Are from Israel," 222.

century in music and scholarship during the Mandatory Palestine/Eretz Israel period.[21] The music video for the song "The Center of the Unknown," released in 2019, begins with the devil in a black, hooded cloak walking across the desert as an offscreen ney (Arabic/Mediterranean end-blown flute) plays a tempoless introductory solo reminiscent of Arabic taqsim prior to the band entering with rhythmic drumming and black-metal screaming.[22] At two minutes and twenty-nine seconds into the song, two darbuka (chalice-shaped hand drums) enter the texture while band member Eylon Bart plays a solo on the saz, a Persian or Turkish long-necked string instrument. Arallu clearly projects their Israeli identity in their music while maintaining a decidedly extreme sound that blends aspects of black and death metal.

In both of the above examples we see not only the inclusion of textual and musical characteristics that signal the geographical identity of the bands, but also a desire to resist oppression and hatred in the forms of poverty and antisemitism respectively. The vast majority of metal found in the third canon valorizes resistance, and resistance is the closest thing the canon has to a hierarchizing force; to be unoppressed or apathetic in the third canon is to risk irrelevance. I thus turn to resistance in the third canon as a way of understanding the priorities and capital that make bands canonizable and foster successful scholarship.

Metal as Resistance

I admit that I am a bit fearful as I launch into a critique of a canon that advocates for oppressed communities to resist their oppressors. I do not want to give the impression that I think such activities are the frivolous work of "social justice warriors," or that scholars should avoid

[21] Israel Bartal, "From St. Petersburg to Zion: The Discovery of Jewish National Music," in *Tangled Roots: The Emergence of Israeli Culture* (Providence, RI: *Brown Judaic Studies*, 2020), 97–98.
[22] "ARALLU – The Center OF The Unknown [Official Video]," YouTube video, uploaded by Satanath Records, October 22, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmByegtteaA 0:02.

teaching about ethics and morals because that is not appropriate for academics to do.[23] However, I do expect what follows may elicit strong reactions due to the sensitive nature of discussing the epistemological and methodological frameworks employed in the academy to defend or promote marginalized communities.[24] Thus, I can only reiterate that I am a fan of the mission represented by this canon, and that I offer criticism in the interest of strengthening arguments and perpetuating the best the third canon has to offer.

Arguing that resistance is valorized in the academic disciplines that inform the third canon is akin to saying that Beethoven is valorized in historical musicology; it is not a particularly astute claim. However, the fact that resistance is valorized allows us to reflexively consider what it means to engage with resistance as a tool for the creation of interest and cultural capital in academic work. In her widely cited article "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformation of Power through Bedouin Women," Lila Abu-Lughod notes that the popularity of resistance as a topic in the social sciences has led to "a tendency to romanticize resistance, to read all forms of resistance as signs of the ineffectiveness of systems of power and of the resilience and creativity of the human spirit in its refusal to be dominated." This in turn allows scholars to "collapse distinctions between forms of resistance and foreclose certain questions about the workings of power."[25] In what follows I am particularly interested in the collapse of distinctions between forms of resistance, in both the sense that this collapse can lead to a

[23] For more on the (in)appropriateness of teaching morality in the academy, see Stanley Fish, "I Know It When I See It: A Reply to Kiss and Euben," in *Debating Moral Education: Rethinking the Role of the Modern University*, ed. Elizabeth Kiss and J. Peter Euben (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 76–91.
[24] Guillory's *Cultural Capital*, which criticizes liberal pluralism and identity politics in the academy circa 1993 as they pertained to debates about the value of representation in canon formation, was noted by Henry Louis Gates Jr. as having the power to outrage. On the rear cover copy of the 1993 paperback, Gates writes, "Ceding nothing to sentiment, Guillory has written an intellectually severe and uncompromising study that will leave few of our comfortable commonplaces quite intact. This is, in short, a landmark work: one that will outrage and inform in equal measure." This assessment of Guillory demonstrates that even the most brilliant work of criticism toward morally laden epistemologies runs the risk of offending in the academy.
[25] Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17 (1990): 41–42.

homogenized theory of resistance and that it can allow scholars to ignore instances of resistance that are the opposite of egalitarian. Both can be seen in the third canon, and the existence of the two in such close proximity shows the problem with reducing all resistance to (post-)Marxist allegories.

To say that the third canon valorizes resistance brings with it certain assumptions about the music in that canon and the community that makes it. Primary among these is the assumption that the metal community lacks power in broader society because it is suppressed by other more powerful forces. Guillory points out that arguments around literary canonization incorrectly

> make the claim that the process of canonical selection is always also a process of social exclusion, specifically the exclusion of female, black, ethnic, or working-class authors from the literary canon. This unrepresentative content of the canon is described in the rhetoric of canonical critique as a kind of scandal, after two millennia a scandal which has gone on long enough.[26]

Though the works of the above identity groups were being taught in the academy at the time, and thus in Guillory's view part of the literary canon, he argues that the works needed to emphasize their associations with socially excluded community to maintain their cultural capital within the academy.

> It is relatively easy to see why it has seemed necessary to many progressive critics to present certain texts by minority authors as *intrinsically* noncanonical, as unassimilable to the traditional canon. The separatist strategy follows from the same basic assumption of pluralist canonical critique as the integrationist, that the process of the inclusion or exclusion of texts is identical to the representation or nonrepresentation of social groups. In the context of curricular revision, the category of the noncanonical loses its empty significance as merely the sum total of what is not included in the canon, and takes on a content specified by the contemporary critique: the noncanonical must be conceived as the *actively* excluded, the object of a historical repression. But paradoxically, the most surprising aspect of the current legitimation crisis is the fact that the "noncanonical" is not what fails to appear in the classroom, but what, in the context of liberal pedagogy, *signifies exclusion*. The noncanonical is a newly constituted category of text production and reception, permitting certain authors and texts to be *taught* as noncanonical, to have the status of noncanonical works in the classroom. This effect is quite different from the effect of total absence, of nonrepresentation *tout court*. What is means is that the social

[26] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 9.

> referents of inclusion and exclusion—the dominant or subordinate groups defined by race, gender, class, or national status—are now represented in the discourse of canon formation by two groups of authors and texts: the canonical and the non-canonical. It is only *as* canonical works that certain texts can be said to represent hegemonic social groups. Conversely, it is only *as* noncanonical works that certain other texts can truly represent socially subordinated groups.[27]

It is this ability to claim that a work is noncanonical due to its associations with marginalized communities that allows for the valorization of resistance and the collection of cultural capital in the academy through works that are, in fact, canonical.

In the metal realm, the second and third canons possess many works that signify exclusion in the sense mentioned above. This is because the works in those canons were not created to defend metal music and culture from an existential threat but to promote music that is associated with a social group that experiences exclusion. A case study of this can be found in Cynthia P Wong's chapter on Chinese metal band Tang Dynasty.[28] Throughout the chapter Wong presents examples of marginalization that impacted the band, ranging from culturally repressed masculinity to political oppression during the Cultural Revolution to American band member Kaiser Kuo's needing to flee China during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.[29] As Kuo is American, Wong raises issues of media representation of Asian-American masculinity in order to address how it may have impacted the type of masculinity the band performed in tandem with conceptions from the Tang Dynasty. As a result her work now addresses Asian Americans alongside Asians, drawing wider boundaries of relevance with regard to socially excluded groups. But she never presents a concrete instance of the band suffering for their participation in metal music; she rather mentions how the band benefited from adoring fans and groupies, and

[27] Guillory, *Cultural Capital*, 9.
[28] Cynthia P. Wong, "'A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty': Masculinity, Male Camaraderie, and Chinese Heavy Metal in the 1990s," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 63–85.
[29] Wong, "Tang Dynasty", 65, 74, and 79 respectively.

sold an estimated 900,000 copies of their album.[30] In contrast, Suroosh Alvi's documentary *Heavy Metal in Baghdad* presents how the band members were attacked for their involvement in metal music; I speak more about this in my previous chapter.[31] My analysis of Wong's work is not arguing that Tang Dynasty never experienced oppression as a result of their identity, or that there is no value in canonizing a band that succeeded despite the possibility of being impacted negatively by marginalization. The point is to demonstrate how the third canon features music and identities that signify exclusion.

Though what follows is not a problem in the third canon I wish to critique, I mention it in the interest of bolstering reflexivity. In some cases, the need to claim capital through signifying exclusion can surpass the need to offer solutions for social change. Peter Osbourne argues that forming associations with oppressed identity groups can surpass in importance the specifics of the oppression and the remedies needed to rectify it.[32] Gaining cultural capital through associating with marginalized groups can further create a situation in which difference is perpetuated in order to simply reverse the traditional hierarchies of cultural capital rather than to seek political alliance for material gain.

> Claiming an "identity" on the basis of the experience of a specific oppression is seen here as the ground for a wholly new kind of politics, for which the affirmation and validation of experiences of "difference" are at least as important as the analysis of the basis of oppression and its location within the perspective of a wider oppositional movement—if not more so. On this model, oppressed social identities are transformed *directly* into oppositional political identities through a celebration of difference which inverts the prevailing structure of value but leaves the structure of the differences untouched. . . . The problem with [this] position is that it tends to reduce radical politics to the expression of oppressed subjectivities, and thereby to lead to the construction of moralistic, and often simply additive, "hierarchies of oppression," whereby the political significance attributed to the views of particular individuals is proportional to the sum of their

[30] Wong, "Tang Dynasty," 72–73, 82, 79.
[31] Alvi, dir., *Heavy Metal in Baghdad*.
[32] Peter Osbourne, "Radicalism Without Limit?: Discourse, Democracy, and the Politics of Identity," in *Socialism and the Limits of Liberalism,* ed. Peter Osborne (New York: Verso, 1991), 439–59.

> oppressions. Such a tendency both positively encourages a fragmentation of political agency and harbours the danger of exacerbating conflicts between oppressed groups.[33]

I stress that I do not find this to be a problem in the third canon, nor do I wish to diminish the value of ideological victories or of representing marginalized communities in academic spaces. I raise this issue here for two reasons. First, because I think there is always opportunity to take reflexive stock of what is being accomplished with scholarship in order to ensure that the work being done has benefit outside the ivory tower.[34] Scholarship should ultimately aim to bolster the value and integrity of any identities associated with it, rather than seek to capitalize on particular identities for individual gain. Second, scholars of the third canon should try to avoid being seen as capitalizing on the reversal of traditional hierarchies of capital in order to prevent attacks from reductionist agitators who allege "reverse racism," or something equally aimed at inciting conservative populist anger.[35] To assume that humanist scholarship is not impacted by such political mudslinging is, frankly, myopic.

The above theory about canonization of socially marginalized people applies to metal music and culture with regard to both metal-based identities and identities that can be efficiently summarized as "race/class/gender" in higher-education classrooms (though the latter identities include any number of marginalized groups). When specifically applied to the third canon, this theory shows how third-canon aca-fans benefit within their disciplines from using two bodies of knowledge.[36] The first is their insider knowledge as a member of the marginalized heavy metal community. The second is awareness of concerns and methodologies that have arisen in response

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[33] Osbourne, "Radicalism Without Limit?," 439–59.
[34] For more on scholarly work that benefits those outside the academy, see Craig Calhoun, "Foreword," in *Engaging Contradictions: Theory, Politics, and Methods of Activist Scholarship*, ed. Charles Hale (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), xiii–xxvi.
[35] For more on reverse racism, see for instance Stanley Fish, "Reverse Racism, or How the Pot Got to Call the Kettle Black," *The Atlantic*, November 1993, https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/politics/race/fish.htm.
[36] For more on aca-fans, see Jenkins, *Textual Poachers*.

to the "crisis of representation" in anthropology and related disciplines.[37] In the context of global metal, awareness of the crisis manifests as knowing the damage that power imbalances can cause when representing marginalized communities and making reflexive efforts to maintain egalitarian values through ethical representation.

Metal Rules the Globe

Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene's *Metal Rules the Globe*, as mentioned previously in this chapter, contributes significantly to the third canon through its theorization of the global metal community. While the text's theoretical contributions are myriad, its focus on the way the global metal community shapes individual metal identities, and on how metal identifiers respond to and resist globalization through the lens of their identity, merits attention here. Wallach, Berger, and Greene identify two primary challenges that result from globalization: the rejection of local traditions arising from exposure to global institutions and the rapid transformation of societies resulting from the introduction of things like international fast-food chains and the restructuring of industries.

> In this book we suggest that metalheads around the world are responding to these twin challenges of globalization in ways that reject both conformity to a new global capitalist order *and* narrow fundamentalisms based on ethnicity, religion, or locality. As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, when musicians and fans around the world align themselves with a transnational metal community, they begin to stake out stances and identities that are sharply opposed to certain local or national customs and values, while strengthening their rootedness in others. In every case discussed here, heavy metal fandom serves as a viable cultural and affective alternative for disempowered youths, one that is often just as critical of globalization's tendency to bring with it crass consumerism, class divisiveness, and uneven development as it is of the authority of traditional norms of behavior.[38]

[37] The classic anthropological text on the crisis of representation is George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). For more on the crisis of representation with regard to the post-colonial, see Edward W. Said, "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," *Critical Inquiry* 15 (1989): 205–25.
[38] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 6–7.

Wallach, Berger, and Greene situate their work alongside "a number of edited volumes published in the new century that, like *Metal Rules the Globe*, focus on a single music genre from a global, cross-cultural perspective," noting "growing scholarly attention" among ethnomusicology, cultural studies, and popular music studies to this format and approach.[39] *Metal Rules the Globe* seeks cultural capital in this scholarly community by producing work that, like we saw with Varas-Díaz, foregrounds metal's political activity because it is produced by marginalized people who resist their unjust circumstances. However, there are several points that complicate the straightforwardness of the political view of metal presented in Wallach, Berger, and Greene's theory on metal and globalization.

. . . and politics

The impulse to politicize metal stems in part from the desire to emulate scholarship on punk and hip hop, where the connections to politics are often more direct.[40] This points to the disciplinary tastes and methodologies of anthropology, ethnomusicology, folklore, cultural studies, and others that participate in this canon *necessitating* that metal and the metal community struggle against oppressive forces in order to be canonizable. The defense of metal in the third canon is about the metal community at face value, but is perhaps more about the struggle of oppressed classes and identities as defined by Marxist and post-Marxist theorists. It then becomes the scholars' goal to find the politics in metal and to make it fit the theory. This can overstate the importance of politics in metal in general. Niall Scott, for instance, has documented the dislike of traditional politics in much of the metal community and the frequent

[39] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 30.
[40] Phillipov, *Death Metal*, 53.

use of the word "apolitical" by community outsiders and insiders alike to describe metal's politics.[41] While Scott acknowledges that metal is committed to "tribal identities and is proud in voicing its connections to historical facts and myths of its working-class heritage," talking about resisting the evils of South American dictatorships is far more direct as a political message.[42]

. . . and representation of the globe

For Wallach, Berger, and Greene, the desire to produce work that demonstrates a unifying political orientation across the globe is perhaps part of an anti-colonial move in anthropology and related fields away from perceiving of the world as separatable and representable regions. The editors of *Metal Rules the Globe* present the world as a place where power, ideas, and culture circulate and manifest in ways that cross traditional boundaries and can be best understood through rigorous ethnographic research and reflexive methodologies. While this move toward a boundaryless world presents ethical and methodological benefits, it also allows for the selection of boundaries in a way that minimizes difference in order to present a unified work that will bring cultural capital to its authors.

Michelle Bigenho, an anthropologist who is often mistaken for an ethnomusicologist because her work centers on "Bolivian national and ethnic identities through the lens of music performance practices," points to differences in the disciplines of anthropology and ethnomusicology that relate to the decolonization of anthropological work. She argues that ethnomusicologists, because of the expectations of their discipline (at least as of 2008, three years before *Metal Rule the Globe* was published), map the world into musical regions in a way

[41] Scott, "Heavy Metal and the Deafening Threat of the Apolitical," 228.
[42] If you take Scott's statement as evidence of metal's political commitment, you are validating Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" as a political anthem.

that leads to the possibility of coverage of the world of music and the organization of expertise by region.

> Within two years after the publication of my book, in which "Bolivian music" was featured prominently in the title, I had received a total of three requests to write ethnomusicology textbook entries on "Andean music." Some of these textbook projects seemed to be aimed at the generic "World Music" class, and some of the editors were already working under contracts. I must admit, I was rather puzzled by the pedagogical project of covering a musical map. I have not done a meticulous study of course offerings in anthropology departments, but among my disciplinary colleagues, I have not heard of anyone presently having to teach a "World Cultures" class. As is often the case, institutional frameworks take on lives of their own, beyond the control of individuals who work within them, but the mapping project embedded in these ethnomusicology textbook requests seems at odds with "the critique" and the accompanying attempts at decolonizing the discipline of anthropology.
>
> While anthropology has been linked to mapping projects and is still connected to geographic expertise, the critique within the discipline has gone hand in hand with an array of debates about area studies. Anthropologists today do not always claim a geographic expertise and in some cases it has even become more fashionable to disclaim a geographic expertise. Anthropologists seem to be taking seriously Clifford Geertz's suggestion that we don't study *places* but rather study *in* places.[43]

By citing Bigenho, I am not claiming that *Metal Rules the Globe* aims to map the metal world in the colonial sense outlined above. The book seeks the opposite by navigating similarities and differences between people through an imagined community that spans the globe.[44] This view of metal as an "unmappable" global culture makes sense given the scholarly identities of the three authors of *Metal Rules the Globe*; Wallach's and Greene's PhDs are in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania (though they both have strong ties to ethnomusicology), and Berger's

[43] Bigenho, "Why I'm Not an Ethnomusicologist," 28–32.
[44] The classic text on imagined communities is Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

is in Ethnomusicology and Folklore from the anthropologically oriented program at Indiana University.[45]

Despite its resistance to mapping, *Metal Rules the Globe* benefits from the phenomenon because it collects cultural capital by covering the metal globe through its numerous, regionally bounded case studies. This is reinforced through its contents, which features mappable regions including China, Indonesia/Malaysia/Singapore, Nepal, Brazil, North America, Norway, Israel, and others.[46] So while *Metal Rules the Globe* is not participating in mapping in the colonial sense, mapping is reflected in the disciplinary expertise of its authors and in the manner in which it approaches a theory of global metal. This approach ultimately allows for a more cohesive theory of metal's global resistance to oppressive forces because it allows the authors to beneficially select examples of global metal that demonstrate resistance.

. . . and extremism/fundamentalism

Much scholarship on metal, including an entire section of *Metal Rules the Globe* titled "Metal and Extremist Ideologies," documents the existence of the very "narrow fundamentalisms based on ethnicity, religion, or locality" that Wallach, Berger, and Greene say are rejected by global metalheads.[47] Much of this work tends to deemphasize or downplay the existence of extremism in metal; Keith Kahn-Harris says "while most black metal and extreme metal scene

[45] For an anthropologically oriented approach to ethnomusicology, see Alan Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964). Merriam spent a significant part of his career at Indiana University. I note that, unlike Bigenho, Greene identifies as an ethnomusicologist: see his faculty webpage, "Paul D. Greene Biography," accessed 11/24/2022, https://www.brandywine.psu.edu/person/paul-greene,. Further, I have seen Jeremy Wallach at two Society for Ethnomusicology conferences.
[46] See the following chapters found in *Metal Rules the Globe*: Wong, "'A Dream Return to Tang Dynasty'"; Jeremy Wallach, "Unleashed in the East: Metal Music, Masculinity, and 'Malayness' in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 86–105; Greene, "Electronic and Affective"; Avelar, "Otherwise National"; Sharon Hochhauser, "The Marketing of Anglo-Identity in the North American Hatecore Metal Industry," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 161–79; Ross Hagen, "Musical Style, Ideology, and Myth in Norwegian Black Metal," in *Metal Rules the Globe*, 180–99; and Kahn-Harris, "'You Are from Israel.'"
[47] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 159–223.

members are not neo-Nazi sympathizers, casual racism is far from uncommon within the scene." Still, the existence of extremism in the canon challenges Wallach, Berger, and Greene's theory and shows that there is cultural capital in writing about the most taboo and transgressive forms of extreme metal *despite* their supposedly not being representative of the global metal community.[48] That there is cultural capital in such work is evident when one does the lightest of searches for the topic. Work by Michelle Phillipov, Benjamin Hedge Olson, and Karl Spraklen demonstrates this, with Spraklen saying

> the church burnings and murders associated with the second wave [of Norwegian black metal]—especially the murder of the Mayhem guitarist Euronymous by Varg Vikernes of Burzum—have even become well-known beyond the imaginary community of heavy metal, in popular culture, and the learned academy.[49]

The fact that the actions of the second-wave Norwegian black metal scene are well known beyond the metal community is significant because it presents an opportunity not seen since the PMRC hearings in the 1980s to engage with a topic of broad cultural importance outside the academy. *The Guardian* ran an article in March 2009 about Vikernes titled "Norway's Most Notorious Musician to be Released from Prison."[50] In December of the same year the *New York Times* ran a review of the documentary *Until the Light Takes Us*, which covers the Norwegian black metal scene during its arson and murder years, titled "The Music of Church Burning."[51] The spread of "National Socialist Black Metal" (NSBM) in the United States with the rise of radical right politics in the twenty-first century is documented by Hodge Olson, who notes that in

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[48] Kahn-Harris, "'You Are from Israel,'" 203.
[49] Phillipov, "Extreme Music for Extreme People," 152–65; Benjamin Hodge Olsen, "Voice of our Blood: National Socialist Discourses in Black Metal," in *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures*, 136–151; Karl Spraklen, "What Did the Norwegians Ever Do for Us?: Actor-Network Theory, the Second Wave of Black Metal, and the Imaginary Community of Heavy Metal," in *Heavy Metal Music and the Communal Experience*, 151.
[50] Sean Michaels, "Norway's Most Notorious Musician to be Released from Prison," *The Guardian*, March 11, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/music/2009/mar/11/norwegian-black-metal-varg-vikernes.
[51] Mike Hale, "The Music of Church Burning," *New York Times*, December 3, 2009. https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/04/movies/04until.html.

2019 a man associated with black metal named Holden Matthews plead guilty to burning three historically African American churches due to the influence of Varg Vikernes. Hodge Olsen too notes the presence of NSBM participants at the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, who were identifiable by their Burzum (Vikernes's band) T-shirts.[52] The Southern Poverty Law Center too highlights Matthews's ties to black metal in their publication on the incident.[53] While Hodge Olsen is right to raise awareness of fascism in NSBM in his work, raising awareness goes hand-in-hand with cementing the importance of Vikerness and Norwegian black metal in the second canon.

Ross Hagen's chapter in *Metal Rules the Globe* on Norwegian black metal, which details the arson and murders committed by men like Vikernes, is one of the more overt examples of the simultaneous critique and canonization of the black metal subgenre. Hagen makes clear the acts of these bands were unacceptable, and yet in doing so he canonizes other examples of vile behavior coming from the Norwegian scene.

> The criminality of the Norwegian black metal scene in the early 1990s was an aberration as far as metal in Scandinavia and elsewhere is concerned. With a few exceptions, such as the assault conviction in 2007 of Gorgoroth's singer Gaahl, the overt criminality of the early black metal scene has not continued. Most of the violence in Norway had ceased by 1994 as the sociopathic element was either incarcerated or had simply outgrown such criminal activities.[54]

The chapter presents further examples the atrocities committed by members of the 1990s Norwegian black metal scene alongside statements defending the subgenre. Hagen later says "although the extreme actions and sensational nationalist rhetoric of individuals such as Vikernes

[52] Benjamin Hodge Olsen, "Burzum Shirts, Paramilitarism, and National Socialist Black Metal in the Twenty-First Century," *Metal Music Studies* 7 (2021): 38–39.
[53] Michael Edison Hayden, "Suspect in Church Burnings Influenced by 'Black Metal Music,' Police Say, but Not All Black Metal Is the Same," *Southern Poverty Law Center*, April 12, 2019, https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/04/12/suspect-church-burnings-influenced-black-metal-music-police-say-not-all-black-metal-same.
[54] Hagen, "Norwegian Black Metal," 183.

have, for better or worse, undoubtedly provided the scene with massive publicity, support for his actions is often scarce in the current black metal scene."[55] Given the egalitarian views of the International Society for Metal Music Studies, it seems dissonant that the heavily publicized atrocities of Norwegian black metal are frequently used for the creation of capital in metal studies. However, because the music and its problems form no greater basis for assuming the ambivalent "love the music, hate the musicians" style of writing on metal that brings cultural capital in the field, scholarship on Norwegian black metal continues to be produced.[56]

Metal studies should take offense at the continued prominence of overt racists in its canons, especially because it is well known that some of the creators of this music are ethnonationalist. Hagen says that

> Vikernes provides a provocative entry into Norwegian black metal ideologies and their relationships to Germanic myth and legend. Although he remains controversial within the scene, his political and spiritual views often form a paradigm for younger black metal musicians and fans. Vikernes presented himself as a Satanist in the past, but now he considers himself to be a sort of right-wing Odinist or, in his words, a "pagan nationalist."

And if this passage doesn't make it sufficiently clear that the influential founders of Norwegian black metal are racist, Hagen later says "Vikernes and others in the pagan white supremacy movement see their interest in the Norse pantheon as a Jungian archetype resurfacing from a collective Teutonic unconscious."[57] It is clear that Norwegian black metal is influential and is racist, and no defense suggesting the current black metal scene avoids such practices will remove the existence of this prominent and hyper-problematic extreme metal subgenre from numerous scholarly canons. The status of the current metal scene should not be confused with the work of

[55] Hagen, "Norwegian Black Metal," 195.
[56] See my Chapter 1 for more on this.
[57] Hagen, "Norwegian Black Metal," 190–93.

scholars who continue to reference an influential, racist past because it contributes to their success in the academy.

Bringing global capitalism together with the local fundamentalism of pagan white supremacy, Vikernes shows in interviews that his desire to promote his racist views is the result of the expansion of global capitalism into the Norway of his childhood. In a series of interviews given during his prison sentence for murder, which I will quote at length because they are indicative of the above-mentioned pagan white supremacy and distrust of global capitalism, Vikernes says

> I'm born in Bergen in 1973. I grew up in an idyllic society, really. Homogeneous, no crime. Everything was basically perfect. We had stables with girls riding horses, we were playing on the outside, there were no problems. . . . But when you grow older, you start to see that things isn't the way you want them to be. McDonalds didn't appear until '91 or '92. And when it did we actually took a rifle and a bicycle, and we bicycled, we rode our bikes up to McDonalds and we sat down and started to fire on the windows. . . . We stockpiled weapons, munitions, to prepare for war because we not only suspected there might be a third World War, we hoped that there would be a third World War. Not because we enjoyed destruction so much but because we knew that if you want to build something new you have to destroy the old first.[58]

> There's more chaos, war, pollution now more than ever before in our recorded history. Of course, we might have known a period with even worse conditions, but the Christians burned all the records that could tell us about it anyway, like in the Library of Alexandria. Wherever the Catholics, or Protestants, or Christians came, they destroyed the culture, they ruined the culture, they burned the culture, and they burned the records of these cultures. That includes the European cultures, that includes African cultures, Asian cultures, American cultures. Wherever they were, they destroyed everything. They want to replace our culture with Americanization, with the Judeo-Christian cultures. Christianity is the root to all problems in the modern world.[59]

> Everybody can relate to Odin, and Thor, and Freya in Norway. Because it's our religion. We are not Christian, Christianity is a Jewish religion. Christianity was originally a Jewish sect. Baptism is all about a symbolic ritual murder of the non-Jewish, of the gentile. That they murder the gentile child, and then they call the Jewish name that is supposed to replace the pagan soul.[60]

[58] Aaron Aites and Audrey Ewell, dirs., *Until the Light Takes Us*, (New York: Factory 25, 2008), DVD, 22:08.
[59] Aites and Ewell, dirs.., *Until the Light Takes Us*, 36:11.
[60] Aites and Ewell, dirs.., *Until the Light Takes Us*, 38:55.

I also note his antisemitism, militarism, and anti-Americanism as an extension of his anti-global-capitalist stance. Though Wallach, Berger, and Greene theorize that metal fans around the globe respond to globalization by resisting fundamentalism, it is an oversight at best that Vikernes, exception or no, is not more prominently mentioned as an exception to this theory. Wallach, Berger, and Greene write that, with regard to prominent challenges related to globalism,

> some have turned to religious or ethnonational extremism in the quest for guarantors of personal security during uncertain times. Thus, as Manuel Castells argues, one paradoxical result of rapid globalization is that many people retreat into individual identities, dividing the world into rigid us/them dichotomies.[61]

Given this passage comes immediately before the one where they say that global metal fans reject "narrow fundamentalisms," minimizing Vikernes further points to the desire in the discipline to promote the egalitarianism of global metal while gaining capital through critiquing (and thus canonizing) Norwegian black metal.

Metal as Folklore

Ultimately, Wallach, Berger, and Greene's theory of global metal capitalizes on representing metal as a politically progressive artform that resists oppression. The need for metal scholars of the third canon to (mis)represent metal music as politically left becomes increasingly meaningful when one considers the importance of folklore to anthropologically oriented disciplines that study music. To say that metal music resists oppression is only part of the equation; scholars of the third canon must present to their readers the metal oppressed. Despite advances in the theory and ethics of representing marginalized people, there is still capital to be found in presenting the global lower class as unified by their "folkness," presumably due to the

[61] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 6–7.

assumption that their limited means deprive them of access to cosmopolitanism.[62] As metal music studies from its foundational texts has presented metal music as oppressed by powerful forces and as blue collar music, it is not a far stretch to present the metal community as an oppressed folk resisting its oppressors.

The third canon justifies its defense of metal by approaching metal music as folk music, or the music of a folk that can be studied using anthropologically inclined methodologies and epistemological frameworks. This canon desires to preserve culturally rich, marginalized music in order to protect it from extinction at the hands of powerful capitalist forces. Jesse A. Fivecoate, Kristina Downs, and Meredith A. E. McGriff summarize the identity and interests of the field of folkloristics.

> Folklorists are notable because they acknowledge that the vernacular knowledge held by small groups of people is valued, valuable, and worthy of serious academic attention. That vernacular knowledge is not limited to specific kinds of verbal acts, material objects, or customs. . . . Folklorists are drawn to that which is noninstitutional, that which often lacks power in larger social, economic, governmental, or academic structures. As a whole, folklorists are attentive to issues of power, authority, and marginalization, and folkloristics is a tool for countertrivialization.[63]

I will illustrate how the third canon "folklorizes" metal music through comparative analysis with early blues scholarship, which was influenced by such anthropological, ethnomusicological, and folklorist perspectives. My comparative analysis will show that the folklorizing of metal music, as was done in discussions of the blues, deemphasizes many contemporary and most popular

[62] For more on the implicit bias that lets anthropologists assume they are more cosmopolitan than their research subjects, see Steven Feld, *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 16. Feld says "I was knocked out by this moment of contact with Nii Noi, by the sensation that as complete strangers we could so instantly know each other, by the sensation that we might equally embody closely overlapping genealogies of listening. I was equally knocked out by the question of whether my amazement was itself the historical product of an unwitting racism. I mean, why should I be surprised that an African musician has spent equally many years listening to what I've been listening to?"

[63] Jesse A. Fivecoate, Kristina Downs, and Meredith A. E. McGriff, "Envisioning a Future Folkloristics," in *Advancing Folkloristics*, ed. Jesse A. Fivecoate, Kristina Downs, and Meredith A. E. McGriff (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021), 1.

developments in the music, as it ties these developments to powerful economic and societal forces. This deemphasis increases the need for preservation of the scholars' preferred forms of metal because it allows scholarship to say the popular musical developments lack cultural value due to their capitalist-aligned features. It also, in some cases, allows scholars to conveniently ignore the popular forms of the music in favor of highlighting music that fits into the canon's main arguments. Crucially, the third canon maintains the same abject subgenres as the second canon but for different reasons: for the second canon the abject subgenres were as such due to a lack of seriousness, and for the third canon they were abject due to a popularity that threatened to overtake and homogenize the idiosyncrasies of smaller, "local" metal communities. Thus, the defense of metal in the third canon relates to the preservation of such diverse, marginalized communities from the assimilating forces of capitalism and globalism.

In his chapter "Hanging on for Dear Life: Archives and Preservation," Bruno Nettl outlines the importance of the practice of the preservation of music in the disciplines of folklore and ethnomusicology.

> Of the many definitions of ethnomusicology, none explicitly or implicitly includes the concept of preservation as a major purpose or component. Yet the preservation of music in various forms has all along been one of the major activities. This urge, characteristic especially of the early history of our field, continues with us in the present. At the 1950 meetings of folklorists and ethnomusicologists in Bloomington, Indiana . . . major sessions were devoted to the subject, and in 1963, at the sixteenth annual conference of the International Folk Music Council in Jerusalem, a full session was held on "preservation and renewal of folk and traditional music." Alan Lomax devoted much of his life trying to defend against the "cultural grey-out" that would result from the disappearance of separable traditions.[64]

Alan Lomax's contributions to blues scholarship are archetypal examples of the impulse to preserve music due to the perception that globalizing, capitalist culture will erase local traditions

[64] Bruno Nettl, "Hanging on for Dear Life: Archives and Preservation," in *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2005), 161–71.

in favor of homogenization. In his documentary *The Birth of the Blues*, Lomax introduces us to the blues music and musicians of the Mississippi Delta by saying

> these people witnessed the birth of the blues. They lived them. This haunting music, laughing at life's ironies and set to a dancing beat, this amazing mix of Europe and Africa, is America's most distinctive song style. It's also the product of the folk culture of the Mississippi Delta. Today the blues has gone electric, gone urban, and belongs to the whole world. And that's fine. But I'm worried because the folk culture that produced the blues has almost disappeared. Now I've spent a lifetime studying ethnic folklore, and in 1931 recorded songs like this one in the Mississippi Delta: [song plays]. Once there were scores of such songs. Now there are only a few left, and only a handful of the older generation remembers them. The wellspring that's given the world so much is drying up, neglected, misunderstood, and unheard. So today we give a platform to this vital folk culture and its creators. We visit picnics and revivals. We meet the black pioneers who helped to carve Mississippi out of the wilderness with their work on farm, river, railroad, and levy, creating a new music out of their loneliness and their deprivation. Music that, once heard, can never be forgotten.[65]

Lomax's goal is clear: to ensure that the music of the working-class folk of the Mississippi Delta, a region noted in the 1930s for its striking divides along race and class lines, was preserved so that future generations could enjoy and be edified by it.[66] He notes the disappearance of the folk blues in the context of the electrification of the blues, which in 1979 when the documentary was produced would include not only the music of African American bluesmen like Muddy Waters and B. B. King but the rock 'n' roll band blues of white musicians like the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin. Lomax's claim that the Delta blues spawned some of the most influential and commercially successful music of the late 1970s would surely be an enticing invitation to people who wished to understand the roots of the music they loved—or for Marxist-aligned music connoisseurs to resist what the record companies told them to buy.

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[65] Alan Lomax, John M. Bishop, and Worth W. Long, *The Land Where the Blues Began*, PBS, 1979, https://www.pbs.org/video/the-land-where-the-blues-began-1979-nsl0ym/.

[66] For more on the perception of the Mississippi Delta that contributed to the romanticization of the Blues, see Marybeth Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 2.

Though it is perhaps obvious that Alan Lomax sought cultural capital with his preservationist work in anthropologically oriented fields and institutions, the context within which he sought such capital is illuminating. Not only was he the son of (and collaborator with) pioneering folk music collector John Lomax, but he was part of a broader movement of blues hunters who were seeking musical authenticity in the Delta blues. Marybeth Hamilton describes this movement:

> It was the blues revival of the 1960s that created the most luminous, enduring mythology of the Delta. The decade saw a flood of record collectors and folk music enthusiasts head south from Memphis and north from Vicksburg, armed with tape recorders, cameras, and notepads, determined to cut through the dross churched out by the commercial record companies and capture the sound of the real thing. The real thing was the Delta blues, the name they devised for the intense voices they found on scratchy 78s and newly issued LP compilations: singers like Son House, Skip James, Charley Patton, and Robert Johnson. What distinguished the music, above all, was the arresting character of the singing. As the pilgrims described it, it was "rough, spontaneous, crude, and unfinished," dominated by "stark, unrelieved emotion," and intense distillation of the music of slavery, "only a step from the wordless field cries and hollers of an older generation." In those recordings these new listeners heard the birth of the blues: impassioned voices echoing with pain and privation, emanating from a flat, waterlogged, primitive landscape seemingly untouched by the modern world.[67]

Despite all the clamoring for House, James, Patton, and Johnson, who at this point were either in the twilight of their careers or dead, the Delta blues musicians' acclaimed status among folk music fans and collectors did not align with their popularity among black audiences during the peaks of their careers. The blues queens of the 1920s and 1930s were the true commercial successes; Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" sold hundreds of thousands of copies to primarily black audiences at one dollar per record at a time when movies at the time cost ten cents. In contrast, Hamilton points out "the awkward fact is that, as newly minted 78s, Charley Patton's recordings sold only moderately in the 1920s and 1930s; those of Son House, Skip James, and

[67] Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues*, 2–4.

Robert Johnson sold barely at all."[68] This fact may be striking to some blues afficionados, for whom Delta blues history is presented as emerging from the folk of the Delta and other locations in the American South, and culminating in the work of the enigmatic but influential Robert Johnson.[69] Yet this history is simply not true.

> The Delta Blues was not born in the bars and dance halls of Mississippi. That Robert Johnson and Charley Patton came to dominate blues history owes to more elusive mediators and shapers of taste. The idea of something called the Delta blues dates from the late twentieth century. It was discovered—or, if you like, invented—by white men and women, as the culmination of a long-standing fascination with uncorrupted black singers, untainted by the city, by commerce, by the sights and sounds of modernity. . . . In [the context of the early-twentieth-century migration of blacks out of the South and into middle-class lives in cities], a small group of white men and women set out on a quest to salvage endangered black voices—rich, stirring, singular voices that the cacophony of race records threatened to drown out. . . . These seekers made extraordinary discoveries, but perhaps more interesting are the fears and obsessions that propelled their quest. All were captivated by the idea of (in John Lomax's term) "uncontaminated" black singing, all embarked on quests to unearth it, and all, in different ways, addressed the same question: How did you capture and preserve the real black voice when black people themselves were embracing reproductions?[70]

The history of the Delta blues presented by those searching for authentic black singing had the curious effect of deemphasizing the race records—records popular with primarily black audiences—that were *actually listened to* by black people. This deemphasis of the blues queens, rooted in historical biases of race, class, and gender, continues to impact perceptions of the blues and blues history, a history in which "popular entertainers were reborn as primitive voices from the dark and demonic Delta, and a music notable for its professionalism and humor was recast as the heart-cry of a suffering people."[71]

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[68] Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues*, 7–11. For more on the blues queens, see Daphne Duval Harrison, *Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920s* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988) and Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York; Pantheon Books, 1998).
[69] For more on the myth and reality of Robert Johnson, see Elijah Wald, *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues* (New York: Amistad, 2004).
[70] Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues*, 11–13.
[71] Wald, *Escaping the Delta*, 1.

It should be noted that the disappearance of the African American folk tradition was not solely a white concern. Pioneering African-American folklorist Zora Neale Hurston, through her study of turpentine, logging, and phosphate camps in rural Florida, came to fear that the oral musical traditions of African Americans were being replaced by recorded music. This fear was shared by other African American intellectuals of the time, including Jean Toomer and W. E. B. Du Bois, who wished to preserve African American folk songs and spirituals for their beauty and their serving as testimony of the struggle toward emancipation.[72] Yet regardless of the race of the scholars and intellectuals in question, the motivations for engaging in this work were the same. Whereas at face value the work of Hurston and Lomax promoted the music of a marginalized community, context tells us this promotion and collection of folk music was done for professional gain and at the expense of promoting a more widely popular black music that Lomax earlier called urban blues.

Charles Keil—who makes his politics clear when he dedicates his monograph *Urban Blues* to the recently deceased Malcolm X, saying "he embodied so many of my hopes for a real cultural pluralism in these less than United States"—offers a direct criticism of the "white liberal" interpretation of the blues coming from a number of early and influential authors on the music.[73] Keil says that "although a number of books and articles have been written about the blues and bluesmen, all the authors without exception refuse to look at, much less discuss, the music as it exists today."[74] And in 1966, the music existed for Keil in the black community as the urban blues of artists like Bobby "Blue" Bland and B. B. King. Keil argues that these authors

[72] Hamilton, *In Search of the* Blues, 14–19.
[73] Charles Keil, *Urban Blues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), viii. The first edition was published in 1966.
[74] Keil, *Urban Blues*, 34.

ignore the urban blues due to their preoccupation with finding the authentic blues in the romanticized music of the Delta.

> I find that the men who write books about the blues are often more interesting than the books themselves. Most of these authors exemplify what might be called the "moldy-fig mentality," "moldy fig" being a term formerly used by "modern" jazzmen and their supporters to designate individuals whose interest in jazz was restricted to the prewar period—pre-World War I, that is. Samuel Charters, Paul Oliver, Harold Courlander, Harry Oster, Pete Welding, Mack McCormick—even Alan Lomax until recently—share a number of interests or preoccupations, first and foremost of which is a quest for the "real" blues. The criteria for a real blues singer, implicit or explicit, are the following. Old age: the performer should preferably be more than sixty years old, blind, arthritic, and toothless (as Lonnie Johnson put it, when first approached for an interview, "are you another one of those guys who wants to put crutches under my ass?"). Obscurity: the blues singer should not have performed in public or have made a recording in at least twenty years; among deceased bluesmen, the best seem to be those who appeared in a big city one day in the 1920s, made from four to six recordings, and then disappeared into the countryside forever. Correct tutelage: the bluesman should have lived the bulk of his life as a sharecropper, coaxing mules and picking cotton, uncontaminated by city influences.
>
> The writers listed above manifest the moldy-fig mentality in different ways and to varying degrees. Admittedly, their criteria for including a given singer among the "true blue" are slightly exaggerated as listed here. But the romanticizing motive or element *is* omnipresent in blues writing, and the reader must keep this factor in mind when evaluating any book on the subject.

Pulling no punches, Keil makes it clear that the authors ignored the present, popular forms of the blues because such forms did not meet the white liberal standards for what was canonizable in blues music, a perception he attributes in part to

> a semi-liberal variant of the patronizing "white man's burden" tradition that has shaped white attitudes toward Negroes for centuries. Somehow a "we-know-what's-best-for-them" or "we-know-what's-best-in-their-music" attitude helps to alleviate some of the oppressive guilt that many whites cannot help feeling.[75]

In combination with Hamilton's scholarship, we see here a revision of history that erases the musical output popular in African-American communities across several decades in order to promote a vision of the blues that matched the white liberal need for a folk that resisted the

[75] Keil, *Urban Blues*, 34–38.

temptations of capitalism. This revision of history has the problem of ignoring the desires of the community being studied in favor of meeting the need of the scholars to gain capital, both cultural and financial, through projecting their values onto the community.

The above analysis of early blues scholarship does not map directly onto metal studies scholarship in the third canon for two reasons. First, since metal studies scholars tend to share membership in the global metal community with the communities they study, they are positioned as at least partial insiders for the purposes of research. Second, due to the developments in anthropological methodology resulting from the crisis of representation, metal studies scholars are most likely as reflexively aware of their values and motivations as Keil was in *Urban Blues*, and they work to "do no harm" to their informants and collaborators. Fivecoate, Downs, and McGriff argue that the field of folkloristics should not simply embrace past standards of progressive behavior, but must embrace "a new turn in folkloristics, one that puts forth an unmistakably queer, feminist, anti-racist force for the decolonization of the academy."[76] The embrace of progressivism in anthropology, ethnomusicology, and folklore is apparent and is clearly developing to match the epistemological needs of this body of scholarship.

However, what is held in common between blues and metal scholarship is the "romanticizing motive," as Keil puts it, to highlight the segment of the studied community that shares the values of the author and their readership. For metal studies, these values are the egalitarian stances of the International Society for Metal Music Studies. This romanticization allows the third canon to both deemphasize metal's history as a popular music in the late 1980s, and to conveniently (though problematically) ignore the elements of the music that do not fit the main lines of their defense of the canon. This neglect includes music from the abject subgenres

[76] Fivecoate, Downs, and McGriff, "Envisioning a Future Folkloristics," 1.

that are marginalized in the second canon because they were commercially successful and widely known.

Folklore Rules the Globe

The folklorizing of global metal music can be seen in Wallach, Berger, and Greene's introductory chapter of *Metal Rules the Globe* in a descriptive passage about a 2002 metal concert at the Grog Shop venue in Cleveland, Ohio. Known for its "intimacy and raw character," the Grog Shop is the type of venue that hosts moderately successful and up-and-coming acts of all sorts and keeps its ticket prices at an affordable level (in contrast to expensive stadium concerts with the biggest acts in the music industry).[77]

> The band takes the stage and launches into its first song. The music is distorted, pounding and brutal, and it is so loud that it seems to fill in the space between the musicians and audience members. Sweat pours down the singer's face as he bellows the lyrics in a voice that is half rasp, half scream. The instrumentalists—bass guitarist, electric guitarist, and drummer—gnash their teeth and grimace as if in pain as they concentrate on bashing out their parts. Some in the predominantly, but not exclusively, male audience respond to the music with moshing (a dance involving intentional collisions with other dancers) and head banging (rhythmic up-and-down movements of the head and neck), their flailing bodies contorting to the beat. Performers and audience are dressed alike—jeans, T-shirts, and long hair or buzz cuts—and they play their roles at the concert as though their lives depended on it. And perhaps, in a sense, they do. Metal around the world has become a viable mode of resistance, of identity assertion, and of self-empowerment, often in the face of powerful, totalizing, and even life-threatening forces.[78]

In this passage there are numerous indicators that the authors interpret the show's participants as a folk who resist capitalist forces through their engagement. The authors explicitly describe metal music and culture as a mode of resistance to powerful, totalizing forces like capitalism. They show through sweaty singing and dancing, jeans-and-T-shirt fashion, and the teeth-gritting determination of the performers that the behavior in this metal show is not of the "disinterested"

[77] "About," *Grog Shop*, accessed 1/16/2023, https://grogshop.gs/about/.
[78] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, "Affective Overdrive," 3.

variety Bourdieu discusses as belonging to the French upper class, but of the "interested" working class.[79] The passage has a descriptive mode akin to the one we saw earlier from Lomax when he described the laboring musicians of the Mississippi Delta. One could almost imagine the authors paraphrasing Lomax by saying "metal music from Los Angeles in the 1980s was broadly popular and had women in its audiences, and that's fine. But I'm worried about the disappearance of the Grog Shop metal scene, whose members made immeasurable contributions to the global metal community while working as grocery store clerks, motel housekeepers, and waitstaff in twenty-four-hour diners." I am of course being facetious, but the fear of metal scenes disappearing—and specifically those of northern Ohio—has been present in scholarship since Harris M. Berger documented the decline of the hard rock scene in the Cleveland/Akron area in his 1999 *Metal, Rock, and Jazz*.[80] The passage from Wallach, Berger, and Greene shows their commitment to anthropological values and epistemologies through their desire to preserve the Cleveland metal scene.

In the first footnote of the introductory chapter, Wallach, Berger, and Greene point to the similarities between this concert description from the Grog shop and one written by Wallach in his 2008 monograph on Indonesian music. Wallach describes a 1997 metal concert at the Poster Café in South Jakarta:

> the air is thick with perspiration, despite the air-conditioning. The entire crowd is wearing black concert T-shirts, many long-sleeved and double-layered despite the heat outside. (Nino, the lead singer of Trauma, explained that the long-sleeved, layered look was *keren*, "cool.") Most of the overwhelmingly male audience members have long, flowing hair that they flail around wildly to the rapid beat of the music. Hundreds of long-haired, black-clad Jakarta metalheads stream in and out of the concert hall, splitting their time between watching the bands onstage and hanging out outside on the wooden benches set up by the front entrance. Many of the bands performing have two alternating vocalists: one is responsible for low growls, the other for the songs' high shrieks. Was this yet

[79] Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 54–56. See also my Chapter 3.
[80] Berger, *Metal, Rock, and Jazz.* It was originally published in 1999 by University Press of New England and was republished by Wesleyan University Press in 2012.

> another example of unequally sized paired instruments in Indonesian music? When I ask an audience member why so many groups have two vocalists, the response is that it is *lebih rame* (more crowded, noisy, fun) that way. Two of the day's headliners are grindcore group Tengkorak (Skull) from Jakarta and death metal band Slowdeath from Surabaya, East Java.[81]

Both of the above passages are model cases for studying the metal community in the third canon in that they represent the canonic norm against which all ethnographic descriptions of metal scenes are evaluated.[82] Thus, the model cases in this canon are metal scenes of the underground and extreme metal variety; this is evinced by their mentioning extreme subgenres like grindcore and death metal, the "brutal" music, growled or screamed vocals, and the general lack of female audience members. These cases share some of the values of the second canon but focus less on artistic achievement and more on the signifiers of class and marginalization that broadcast the musicians' and fans' struggle against oppressive, global forces. In response to these forces that would stop these metal scenes from continuing, metal music and culture must be preserved though documentation and canonization.

The above two passages which demonstrate folklorization are contrasted by, for instance, this excerpt from esteemed rock journalist Lenny Kaye's 1971 review of classic heavy metal band Grand Funk Railroad's sold-out concert at Shea Stadium.

> The crowd moved peaceably and even a mite happily toward the gates, and far from what anyone might have expected, there was little confusion. Hawkers were down to a minimum, the police—many of whom had their hair discreetly on the long side—were mostly young and friendly, and ticket scalpers were non-existent. . . .
>
> There was some inkling of trouble at the gates, where the police were confiscating contraband wine bottles and telling kids to put on their shirts, but it all seemed to be taken in good humor and nobody appeared to mind much. Up a couple of endless escalators, where a good system of hand-me-down ushers took everybody to their seats with a minimum of fuss and bother, and then you could first relax and look out over the field, with that sense of seeing it for the first time, brighter and shinier than the tv image, in real

[81] Jeremy Wallach, *Modern Noise, Fluid Genres: Popular Music in Indonesia, 1997–2001* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 232.
[82] Krause, *Model Cases*, 1–2. See also my Chapter 1.

> full color life with a platform set squarely over second base like a squat frog, flanked by a truly crushing set of speakers.[83]

In this excerpt we see stark contrasts in the venue, the mood of the audience, the cooperative police, and the overall fact that this concert was designed to make enormous amounts of money. The venue is, depending on your proximity to the speakers, assuredly louder than the smaller venues. Kaye says that "with 8,000 watts of amplifiers kicking behind them . . . they're loud, much louder than the other times I've seen them, but also richer, not as ear-splitting and trebly. A volume you can live with, can thrive on, just over the threshold of distortion."[84] Yet despite this volume it lacks the extremity of the other two venues, which have the shrieks, growls, and brutal distortion of the underground extreme subgenres. Kaye's journalism throws the model cases into question by valorizing a metal band that ignores the premise that metal is under threat of extinction. This passage also creates folk heroes of a metal band, but one that is at the height of capitalist power in the music industry, rather than one in need of canonic preservation.

Compare the model cases as well to the portion of the VH1 documentary *When Metal Ruled the World* that discusses lite metal bands like Mötley Crüe when they were just starting to be successful in the 1980s Los Angeles "Sunset Strip" metal scene.[85] There were certainly similarities between the various scenes. The documentary, for instance, stresses the grunginess of the environments where lite metal was being made before it became commercially successful; Skid Row singer Sebastian Bach describes the famed venue the Whiskey A Go Go as smelling like "puke and piss."[86] Yet there are obvious differences, many best absorbed through watching the documentary due to the editing style that complimented or augmented the snippets of

[83] Lenny Kaye, "To Live Outside the Law You Must Be Honest," *Creem* 3 (November 1971), 17.
[84] Kaye, "To Live Outside," 73.
[85] "When Metal Ruled The World 80's LA Sunset Strip Story," VH1, YouTube video, uploaded by adventureswithgavin, December 8, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUrHVWa3s2Y, 6:46–8:04.
[86] "When Metal Ruled The World," 5:31.

interviews that were edited together to create a narrative. The omnipresence of women throughout the documentary—Dee Snider of Twisted Sister notes that "the good looking chicks were into the metal bands"—contrasts with the mostly male environment of the model cases.[87] The fashion of these lite metal bands, and the way they performed their subcultural identities, is far more glamorous and spectacular than the sweaty, jeans-and-T-shirt approach of the model scenes. Guitarist George Lynch of the band Dokken recalls that "people were interested in guitar solos, and musical prowess, and the whole culture that was attached to it. The look, loud music, big hair, all wrapped in one big, nice package. Very appealing."[88] Further, the music being overdriven pop songs, rather than brutal, grunty, and non-tonal, points to a commercial appeal that led to this music being some of the most commercially successful music of the 1980s. None of this points to metal being a folk music that is at risk of obscurity and in need of preservation.

We ultimately see that the anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, and folklorists of the third canon create a problematic representation of metal music and culture due to their resistance to treating the music as popular music. This resistance distorts the scholars' understanding of metal music and culture, and throws into question the need for a preservationist attitude toward local metal cultures. One might argue from my above examples that metal is, in fact, in need of preservation because the examples I chose where metal was thriving were from prior to the 1990s, when metal was at the height of its popularity and commercial success, and the other examples where metal was a folk music were from after the 1990s during the decline of metal's popularity. This argument does not stand for two reasons. The first is that there are in existence commercially successful metal bands from after the 1990s; a scholar could choose to canonize such a band in a manner similar to that done for the model cases. They simply do not because

[87] "When Metal Ruled The World," 2:44.
[88] "When Metal Ruled The World," 10:43.

there is no cultural capital to be gained from such canonization. The second reason is because, as Guillory points out with respect to marginalized communities and the benefits they receive from canonization, canonizing metal bands and scenes does not necessarily correlate with preserving them if the canonizing work does nothing to contribute to the financial wellbeing of the scene. Preservation in the context of metal bands in the third canon is simply a manner of generating cultural capital, rather than truly giving a band the financial means to continue its existence or a scene the ability to keep hosting bands and events.

Conclusion

As noted before, I am partial to the scholarship on this canon for its aim to promote marginalized metal fans. This chapter's exercise in criticism is done with the intent of promoting improvement. In this spirit, I think the best path forward is for scholars of this canon to adopt a reflexive stance in which they are honest about both their personal values and the values of the metal community as a whole. Though anthropologists and their kin tend to be engaged with progressive politics, the same simply cannot be said for much of the metal community. And while there are instances of metal fans being oppressed by powerful capitalist forces, so too are there metal fans spending exorbitant amounts of money on tickets to see their favorite bands. Global metal does not need to be political to be interesting. And when metal bands are political it should be a cause for celebratory canonization.

I am reminded here of another comparative example from the blues: the folk recording collector Lawrence Gellert. While his collections of blues and African American music are famous to those with knowledge of this era of collectorship, and are held in prestigious music archives including the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music, his singular ability to

find political songs where other collectors could not has cast doubt on their authenticity. Further doubt is cast when one considers that he could not produce the names of his informants and the details of his biography. Bruce Conforth says,

> in exploring Gellert's life through his own words and unpublished documents, as well as the words of those who knew him best (some of which could only be published after their authors' deaths), I have found that much of what scholars thought they knew about him was wrong, and that he was, more often than not, a victim of his own insecurities and attempts to build self-respect. The latter led him, unfortunately, to being used by members of the American left: initially through the urging of his own brother, who was clearly aware of the potential to manipulate Gellert and his collection. It also led him to become someone who did as his critics claimed—fabricate some of his more political material in his collections.[89]

In his search for cultural capital amongst American progressives, Gellert sacrificed his integrity. Further, his collecting work, done under the auspices of preserving the political music of the African American community, has done nothing to benefit the African American community; his motivations were entirely selfish. While nothing in *Metal Rules the Globe* to my knowledge has committed so egregious a violation of the methodological and ethical norms of its governing disciplines, metal studies scholars should heed well the lessons learned from Gellert and present metal music and culture as accurately as possible. In doing so, I have every confidence that metal studies can create theories that are rich in interest while maintaining scholarly rigor and accuracy.

[89] Bruce M. Conforth, *African American Folksong and American Cultural Politics: The Lawrence Gellert Story* (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, 2013), 12.

Conclusion

"F*** You, I Won't Do What You Tell Me"

My dissertation analyzes three instances of canonization in metal studies to show that each begins from a position of defending metal music. The first metal studies canon arose in the late 1980s, at a time when heavy metal was a popular and commercially successful form of music, from the need to defend metal against a variety of disparagers including rock journalists, conservative political figures, and scholars. The scholars who crafted the second and third canons in the 2000s followed this precedent of defending metal by asserting that the music was serious and that it was the music of a global proletariat, respectively; both of these arguments are rooted in the disciplinary norms of the scholars who crafted them. What the second and third canons lack is a true need to defend metal music, because the threat to metal music presented in the 1980s no longer existed in a meaningful way in the 2000s.

While the first metal studies canon houses a wide variety of styles of metal, the second and third canons disproportionately focus on extreme metal, a collection of subgenres whose music and non-musical content intentionally transgress mainstream culture's boundaries of good taste. Extreme metal's fans marginalize non-extreme subgenres in order to bolster the importance of extreme metal in the metal world. Such exclusionary practices do not align with the anti-discriminatory values of the International Society for Metal Music Studies. The overrepresentation of elitist extreme metal in metal studies has produced an atmosphere in much of metal studies that limits the types of music that can be discussed. This restrictive environment emerged both because it is professionally beneficial to talk about extreme metal and because extreme metal scholars that are fans of extreme metal marginalize non-extreme metal either by ignoring it or, less commonly, declaring it frivolous.

The dissonance between having egalitarian values and promoting exclusionary music cultures is often rectified in scholarship by divorcing the music from the musicians. But this stance has become tired. At present, there is an unlistenable amount of music available from a variety of free and paid sources, accessible in nearly any location to those in possession of a smart phone. There is no need to listen to, and to canonize, the music of musicians whose behaviors are morally unacceptable. Metal music studies should canonize the music of bands that share the values of the discipline, while not neglecting the scholarly responsibility to choose bands that are significant enough in metal culture to carry the weight of representing the genre. Along with the canonization of morally sound bands, metal studies should aim to return to the first canon's practice of canonizing bands from a wide variety of metal subgenres; this will ensure that metal studies represents the totality of metal music rather than focusing on an elitist segment. By canonizing bands with sound morals from a variety of styles of metal, metal scholars can move from the need to defend metal by asserting it is "not bad" to praising metal for being "good." This subtle shift has profound implications for what is possible in metal studies, and I believe will serve the discipline better in the long run than continuing to canonize extreme metal music.

To counteract the overrepresentation of extreme metal, I will canonize the non-extreme band Rage Against the Machine (RATM). In doing so, I do not wish to suggest that I have a special power to canonize or that I am an important person with capital in the field; I have no such power and am not important in metal studies. I canonize to show that anyone can do it; canons are created through verbal or written means and are sustained by groups that believe the canons have value.[1] Further, I am not unique in resisting the call of underground or extreme

[1] While I control the former, I can only hope for the latter.

metal in favor of writing about something less central to the metal studies canon; I stand on the metaphorical shoulders of those who canonized non-extreme bands before me. Walser did not feel compelled in *Running with the Devil* to subscribe to the common assumption that culture exists in marginal or elite spaces far outside of what is broadly popular.[2] Amber Clifford-Napoleone's work on queerscapes in metal creates a canon that is noticeably not extreme, and yet offers many musically complex and culturally interesting bands that challenge the centrality of heterosexual maleness theorized in metal studies since Walser and Weinstein. As queerness resists the centrality of heterosexual maleness in the work of Clifford-Napoleone, queerness can be used to describe the way non-extreme canons "fail," in the sense theorized by Jack Halberstam, to achieve the moral seriousness ("adulthood") of extreme canons. Yet, in their failure, non-extreme canons allow us "to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior." By failing to meet the expectations of metal studies, canonizing non-extreme metal opens us up to the pleasures of discovering new possibilities.[3]

While perpetuating the overrepresentation of extreme metal is a way for scholars to gain cultural capital and further their careers, to me it seems professionally wrong to do so because it promotes a misleading picture of metal music as a whole. Further, it seems morally frivolous to participate in a field of study that demands egalitarian behavior while canonizing the music of hateful people like Varg Vikernes; as established in Chapter 3, metal fans should be morally serious.[4] The subtitle of my conclusion is a lyric drawn from RATM's song "Killing in the Name Of," a song that protests police brutality and police involvement in racist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan; I consider my desire to subvert the norms of metal scholarship to be in the

[2] Walser, *Running with the Devil*, xxiii–xxiv. See my Chapter 1.
[3] Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 1–4.
[4] See Chapter 3 for an explanation of moral seriousness and moral frivolousness. See Chapter 1 for more on the International Society for Metal Music Studies's support of egalitarianism and rejection of discrimination.

spirit of RATM's resistance, though my cause is less just and my passion and anger is far from comparable.[5]

Canonizing Rage Against the Machine

In 2020, RATM announced after a nine-year hiatus that they would be embarking on a world tour.[6] The tour sold out in minutes, and scalpers were selling tickets at upwards of $400.[7] The tour was repeatedly postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and finally kicked off in July 2022 only to be prematurely ended due to an injury to lead singer Zach de la Rocha.[8] As of 2023 they have four platinum albums, three of which are multiplatinum.[9] They have been nominated to the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame multiple times.[10] Two of the members are people of color; de la Rocha and guitarist Tom Morello are Chicano and Black, respectively. Morello has written numerous activist opinion pieces for the *New York Times*.[11] RATM are a popular, politically progressive, racially diverse metal band. Given the egalitarian stances of the International Society for Metal Music Studies mentioned in Chapter 1, it would stand to reason

[5] See for instance Michael German, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism, White Supremacy, and Far-Right Militancy in Law Enforcement," *Brennan Center for Justice*, August 27, 2020, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/hidden-plain-sight-racism-white-supremacy-and-far-right-militancy-law#.Y9dHBBew_tQ.gmail.
[6] Angie Martoccio, "Rage Against the Machine Announce 2020 Tour," *Rolling Stone*, February 10, 2020, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/rage-against-the-machine-2020-headlining-tour-950346/
[7] Vince Neilstein, "Rage Against the Machine Tour Sold Out in Minutes, Thousands of Tickets Bought by Scalpers," *Metalsucks.net*, February 14, 2020, https://www.metalsucks.net/2020/02/14/rage-against-the-machine-tour-sold-out-in-minutes-thousands-of-tickets-bought-by-scalpers/
[8] Selena Fragassi, "Rage Against the Machine Bring the Sound and the Fury to Public Service Announcement Tour Opener," *Spin*, July 10, 2022, https://www.spin.com/2022/07/rage-against-the-machine-public-service-announcement-tour-opener/. "North American 2023 Rage Tour Cancelled," October 4, 2022, *RATM.com*, https://www.ratm.com/north-american-2023-rage-tour-canceled/.
[9] https://www.riaa.com/gold-platinum/?tab_active=default-award&se=rage+against+the+machine#search_section.
[10] Lisa Respers France, "Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 2018 Nominees Announced, *CNN*, October 5, 2017, https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/05/entertainment/rock-hall-fame-2018-nominees/index.html; "Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation Announces Nominees for 2023 Induction," *Rockhall.com*, accessed February 4, 2023, https://www.rockhall.com/rock-roll-hall-fame-foundation-announces-nominees-2023-induction.
[11] A list of Tom Morello's Opinion pieces for the *New York Times* can be found here: https://www.nytimes.com/column/tom-morello.

that RATM, though not as popular in terms of album sales as bands like Metallica or AC/DC, would be canonized in metal music studies.

They are not.

Walser does not mention RATM at all. This makes sense, since Walser's discography ends in 1991 and RATM's self-titled first album was released in 1992. Still, given his publications on hip hop and the revision to *Running with the Devil* in 2004, Walser was not without opportunity to bring RATM into the metal studies canon.[12]

Weinstein mentions RATM only once in a section on "mapping metal's myriad styles at the end of the twentieth century."

> The continual innovations, schisms, and borrowings by musicians, plus the Humpty-Dumpty approach of critics, publicists, and fans, provide many openings to add to or disagree with the mapping of metal presented here. Does Rage Against the Machine qualify as metal? Should the metallic funk of Sevendust or the hard rock hip-hop of Limp Bizkit be classed as metal? Unlike the cartography of the earth, cultural maps are always up for grabs.[13]

Given Weinstein's bias toward underground and extreme metal, it is not surprising that RATM's metalness is questioned alongside that of nü metal's Limp Bizkit. Though RATM is not considered nü metal because they chronologically predate the emergence of the abject subgenre in the late 1990s, their music draws stylistically from hip hop. In his writing on abject subgenres of metal, Eric Smialek says,

> at the same time, an important part of nu metal's appeal was rooted in its assimilation of rap, electronic dance music, and other styles, displacing metal's prior emphasis on instrumental virtuosity to instead emphasize rhythmic groove. While rap-metal hybrids had existed since the late eighties, nu metal's assimilation of rap aesthetics resulted in a much more dramatically altered approach to rhythm-guitar playing, maximizing its potential for the communication of "heaviness" and the kinetic entrainment of moshers.[14]

[12] For instance, Robert Walser, "Rhythm, Rhyme, and Rhetoric in the Music of Public Enemy," *Ethnomusicology* 39 (1995): 193–217.
[13] Weinstein, *Heavy Metal*, 289.
[14] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," 77–78.

According to Smialek, extreme metal fans find nü metal to be abject because of its associations with blackness and hip hop.[15] It is not hard to see how this extends to RATM. De la Rocha is a rapper, though he at times screams his lyrics in a way that is uncharacteristic of most hip hop music (and of extreme metal as well; his style is, to my knowledge, unique). Guitarist Tom Morello is known for his innovative guitar style that draws on hip hop aesthetics and emphasizes rhythmic groove. For instance, in the song "Bulls on Parade," Morello takes a solo at two minutes and thirty seconds into the track that involves mimicking the hip hop sound of scratching records using his guitar by leaving his wah pedal on a setting that filters low-frequency sounds, rubbing one hand on the strings to create pitched scraping noises, and with the other hand muting and unmuting the guitar signal using a kill switch to create articulation and rhythm in a manner that resembles the way a DJ uses a cross fader.[16] Bassist Tim Commerford and drummer Brad Wilk work together to create repetitive grooves that resemble the record loops that are foundational for hip hop music.[17] The music is unquestionably influenced by hip hop but is still metal given the presence of distorted guitar, bass, and drums rather than a DJ or some other form of electronic beat making such as digital audio workstations.

Sadly, due to the bias toward extreme metal, there is no cultural capital to be gained in metal studies from writing about Rage Against the Machine. As mentioned above, RATM are questionably metal for some fans. The band's murky status signals to extreme metal fans that RATM fans are morally frivolous, which limits the cultural capital to be reaped from the possession of knowledge about the band in the metal community and in metal studies. RATM's

[15] Smialek, "Genre and Expression in Extreme Metal Music," vii.
[16] "Tom Morello Guitar Lessons 03 Bulls on Parade," YouTube, uploaded by DeanBumblebee, November 5, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyxKJLgfT7A.
[17] For more on the record looping techniques that characterize early hip hop music, see Mark Katz, *Groove Music: The Art and Culture of the Hip-Hop DJ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

progressive politics disallow the "ambivalent stance" toward metal music and politics I discuss in Chapter 1; this also limits the capital to be gained from writing about RATM because the alignment of their music and politics with respect to the values of the ISMMS does not generate scholarly interest. Since metal studies has traditionally been essentially a defense of metal music, and RATM is a popular band with sterling progressive morals, there is no need for metal studies scholars to defend a popular band that sounds good and behaves in a politically progressive fashion.

RATM does appear in scholarship that is not metal studies. Jeffrey Daniel Williams, in a dissertation about guitar distortion in American rock, provides RATM as a case study for how fans ignore their radical lyrical content because guitar distortion was accepted into American culture by the time RATM debuted in the 1990s; he notes that conservative politician Paul Ryan was open about his appreciation of the band, which caused Morello to publicly point out the dissonance caused by his fandom and his politics.[18] Jeffrey A. Hall analyzes the lyrics of RATM's song "No Shelter" from the 1998 *Godzilla* movie soundtrack using theory on irony from Kenneth Burke to show how de la Rocha criticizes the movie and capitalism.[19] Andrew Green, whose anthropological and ethnomusicological work primarily centers on Mexican music, focuses on the aesthetics of anger as presented by RATM in a documentary film *Construyendo Dignidad* about a Zapatista uprising in Mexico in 1994.[20] While Williams's dissertation might be considered metal-studies-adjacent because it has a chapter on metal distortion signifying rebellion during the PMRC debates and cites Walser and *Metal Rules the*

[18] Jeffrey Daniel Williams, "Power Chords and Politics: Guitar Distortion as a Topic in American Rock" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2022).
[19] Jeffrey A. Hall, "'No Shelter' in Popular Music: Irony and Appropriation in the Lyrical Criticism of Rage Against the Machine," *Studies in Popular Culture* 26 (2003): 77–89.
[20] Andrew Green, "Rage Against the Machine, Zapatismo, and the Aesthetics of Anger," *Popular Music* 34 (2015): 390–407.

Globe, RATM is included on a chapter about punk and hardcore music.[21] Hall and Green do not engage with metal studies at all. While Hall's 2003 article can be forgiven because it predates most metal studies scholarship and the founding of the ISMMS, Green simply ignores metal studies because it does not contribute to his ability to analyze RATM and control of the metal studies bibliography is unnecessary for publication in anthropology and, apparently, in *Popular Music*.

I think the metal studies community should want to canonize metal bands that play commercially successful, well-regarded music and that display the types of values and politics supported by our scholarly society. Metal studies scholars ought to be able to canonize music that is loved for being stylistically innovative without fear of harming their chances at professional advancement. What follows is an effort to model what I have preached by canonizing Rage Against the Machine.

Bulls on Parade

"Bulls on Parade" is about the terrorism of the military industrial complex. At various points Zack de la Rocha raps lines like these:

> Terror rains drenchin', quenchin' the thirst of the power dons . . .
>
> Weapons not food, not homes, not shoes
> Not need, just feed the war cannibal animal
> I walk the corner to the rubble that used to be a library
> Line up to the mind cemetery now
> What we don't know keeps the contracts alive and movin'
> They don't gotta burn the books they just remove 'em
> While arms warehouses fill as quick as the cells
> Rally 'round the family, pockets full of shells

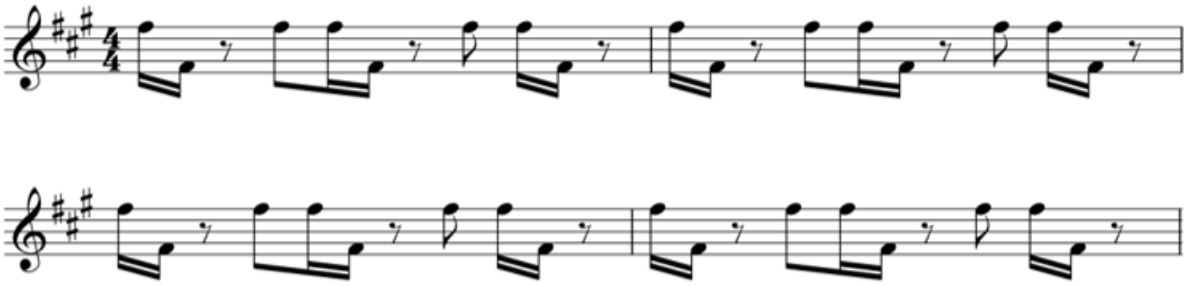
[21] Williams, "Violence, Metal, and the Parents Music Resource Center," in *Power Chords and Politics*, 67–102; Williams, "Punk, Hardcore, and the Disassociation of Distortion with Rebellion," in *Power Chords and Politics*, 103–32.

From these lyrics we see that the "power dons" seek terror. They sell weapons for profit and create fear among the people they dominate while neglecting the population's basic needs like food, clothing, and shelter. They destroy libraries and get rid of books to rob people of liberatory knowledge. While the lyrics of bands like Black Sabbath were considered political for addressing the atmosphere of fear surrounding the "war pigs" who would bring the end of the world, RATM's politics are overtly radical and anti-fascist, calling out oppressive rulers who control their people through fear of violence.[22] "Bulls on Parade" is unambiguously progressive in its politics.

Identifying the key of "Bulls on Parade" is complicated because RATM has performed the song in both F and F# in different contexts, and none of these contexts is solely authoritative. The opening riff played by the guitar and bass is centered on the second fret on the low E string and the fourth fret on the D string; this would indicate the song is in F# minor if the guitar and bass are in standard tuning, as shown in Example 5.1. On the album recording the band is tuned down a half step and thus it sounds in F minor. However, in a lesson video demonstrating how to play the song, Tom Morello says "When you want to rock hard, children, lean on F#." He then proceeds to teach the song without detuning the guitar.[23] Morello's playing in F# is not him being forgetful; there is video of concert performances that show the band playing the song in F#.[24] Other notable metal songs in F# minor include Led Zeppelin's "Immigrant Song," "Crazy Train" by Ozzy Osbourne (the famous riff part), and "You've Got Another Thing Comin'" by Judas Priest. "Bulls on Parade" particularly resembles "Immigrant Song" because the

[22] "War Pigs" is a famous Black Sabbath song. See "War Pigs," YouTube, uploaded by Black Sabbath, February 2, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bc5Nk1DXyEY.
[23] "Tom Morello Guitar Lessons 03 Bulls on Parade."
[24] See, for instance, "Rage Against the Machine – Bulls on Parade – Live at Finsbury Park, London / 2010," YouTube, uploaded by Rage Against the Machine, December 23, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0W6WZK3AfKE.

introductory riff emphasizes octaves, though the songs have different feels due to "Immigrant Song" being significantly faster. Because of this history, and Morello himself saying the song is in F#, I will consider F# as the key of the song.

Example 5.1: "Bulls on Parade" Opening Riff

The song makes extensive use of the wah pedal. After twenty-five seconds of the initial F# octave riff, the band drops out to hear Tom Morello playing an F# chord while pulsing the wah pedal on each beat and throwing in muted string strums to give a "wicka wicka" sound similar to the sounds heard at the opening to the "Theme from Shaft" by Isaac Hayes. As mentioned above, Morello also uses wah in the guitar solo to help shape the record scratching noise. The band reenters as Morello continues to play the wah riff, greatly increasing the heaviness of the riff before the start of the verse.

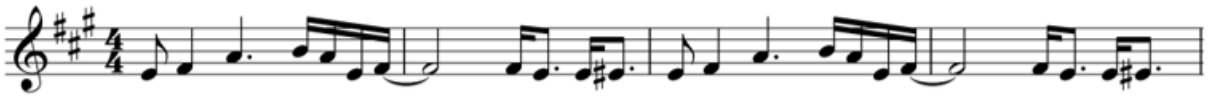
The overdrive on the song resembles that found in Slayer; it is produced by a Marshall JCM800 50-watt head on the dirty channel.[25] However, the guitar tone overall tends to depart dramatically from Slayer due to Morello's use of effects pedals like the wah and the Digitech Whammy, which is a pitch shifting pedal that in its most extreme settings creates a glissando

[25] "Rig Rundown – Tom Morello," YouTube, uploaded by Premier Guitars, February 19, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpY4IIy6b98, 18:02.

sound prized by artists like Morello and Jack White from the White Stripes.[26] While Morello uses effects most notably in his solos to create dramatic guitar tones, he also uses effects and other tone-shaping techniques like switching between different levels of distortion to differentiate between sections of the song and to emphasize or deemphasize the guitar in the musical texture. The drumming style is far closer to AC/DC's straightforward rock beats than to extreme metal blast beat drumming. However, it is notable that drummer Brad Wilk hits the crash cymbals with great frequency, sometimes on every beat. This style of cymbal use is a decided departure from AC/DC and gives a particular intensity to RATM songs when the technique is in use.

As de la Rocha raps the verses, the guitar and bass play a syncopated groove seen in Example 5.2 that sonically falls under the vocals in the texture. The syncopation makes this riff stand out in comparison to most other metal songs analyzed in my dissertation; outside the riff for "Back in Black," where syncopation enters briefly at the end, the example riffs tend to be on the beat, often featuring constant eighth or sixteenth notes. Extreme metal especially tends to have riffs where the notes seemingly come on every available subdivision of the beat because it lends to the manic energy the songs aim to create. RATM's groove in "Bulls on Parade," in contrast, keeps the listener locked into the time created by the drum beat, an inescapable reminder of the terror the described in the lyrics.

[26] A clear example of Morello using a Whammy pedal can be heard in his playing with the band Audioslave during the guitar solo for "Like a Stone." See "Audioslave—Like a Stone (Official Video)," YouTube video, uploaded by Audioslave, October 25, 2009, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QU1nvuxaMA.

Example 5.2: “Bulls on Parade” Groove Riff

“Bulls on Parade” sounds its ties to hip hop in its use of repetitive riffs that are reused throughout the song to demarcate different sections. It is tied to metal through the unmistakable Marshall guitar sound and drumming style. Its direct political message resists metal norms but is not without precedent in songs by bands such as Sepultura and Napalm Death. Overall, I do not think the song should be disqualified from metalness for its hybridity; it is metal enough to be metal. What it lacks in extremity it makes up for in innovation through its stylistic borrowing from hip hop.

And now, since you read this, and if only for a brief while, it is canonic.

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Appendix

Subgenres of Heavy Metal

The below table provides information about the subgenres of heavy metal mentioned in the dissertation to aid in understanding each subgenre's characteristic traits, musical and otherwise, from a comparative perspective. It also provides several exemplary bands and recordings for each subgenre. I have included multiple names for subgenres where appropriate; my ordering of the names should not be taken as a sign of hierarchy. I note that there is active disagreement in the metal community about the boundaries of these subgenres, and further that many of them combine to create new subgenres with hybrid styles not covered in this dissertation ("blackened death metal," "symphonic black metal," and "power doom" come to mind). For more information on subgenres and representative bands, I recommend Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Metallum.[27]

In the metalcore and deathcore subgenres, I mention "breakdowns" in the drums portion of the "Characteristics" column. Breakdowns are moments when the song slows down significantly to as much as to half-tempo or more; they are usually climactic and in live contexts promote moshing or other extreme forms of dance. Breakdowns not only create a dramatic musical contrast from the standard up-tempo metal beats found in metalcore and the extreme, double-bass-style beats of deathcore, but form a distinct genre boundary in contrast to subgenres like thrash and death metal that opt for even faster tempos at climactic moments.[28] An example of a straightforward breakdown can be heard three minutes and fifty seconds into Pantera's "Domination," though the band is not a metalcore or deathcore band.

[27] *Encyclopedia Metallum*, accessed 2/15/2023, https://www.metal-archives.com/.
[28] I have personally heard fans of thrash make fun of breakdowns because of this genre difference.

Table A.1: Subgenres of Heavy Metal

Subgenre	Is it Extreme?	Characteristics	Exemplary Bands and Recordings
Classic Heavy Metal, Classic Metal, Heavy Metal	No	Vocals: sung Guitars: overdriven, but without preamp gain to create extreme distortion Drums: 4/4 rock beats Lyrical Content: sex, drugs, parties, cars, rebelliousness, the occult, Satan, mental instability Fashion: denim, leather, 1970s rock fashion	AC/DC, "Back in Black"; Black Sabbath, "Iron Man"; Deep Purple, "Highway Star"; Kiss, "Rock and Roll All Night"
Lite Metal, Hair Metal, Glam Metal, Pop Metal	No	Vocals: sung Guitars: overdriven, sometimes boosted with pedals Drums: 4/4 rock beats Lyrical Content: sex, drugs, parties, rebelliousness Fashion: big hair, spandex, makeup Other: conspicuous effects	Bon Jovi, "Livin' on a Prayer"; Ozzy Osbourne, "Crazy Train"; Twisted Sister, "We're Not Gonna Take It"
Nü Metal, Nu Metal	No	Vocals: sung, rapped, screamed Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain, noticeably detuned guitars, seven-string guitars Drums: double-bass drum setups, groove-oriented Lyrical Content: mental instability, anger, deviance as rebelliousness Fashion: oversized clothes, chains, spiky or dreadlocked hair, facial piercings, tattoos Other: turntablists, conspicuous effects	Korn, "Freak on a Leash"; Limp Bizkit, "Break Stuff"; Slipknot, "Spit it Out"
Metalcore	No	Vocals: sung and screamed Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain, "clean" moments for contrast Drums: double-bass drum setups, breakdowns Lyrical Content: mental instability, anger, overcoming anger, Jesus/Christianity (not all bands) Fashion: many short haircuts, jeans and T-shirts, tattoos	Bullet for my Valentine, "Waking the Demon"; Killswitch Engage, "The Arms of Sorrow"; The Devil Wears Prada, "Danger: Wildman"

Table A.1: Subgenres of Heavy Metal (cont.)

Power Metal	No	Vocals: sung in an especially high tenor Guitars: distorted with preamp gain, noticeable digital effects, extended solos Drums: double-bass drum setups, rapid tempos Lyrical Content: heroic quests, fantasy Fashion: denim, leather, T-shirts, button-up shirts, long hair (sometimes big) Other: keyboards, conspicuous effects	DragonForce, "Through the Fire and Flames"; Helloween, "Future World"
Symphonic Metal, Opera Metal	No	Vocals: sung Guitars: distorted with preamp gain, noticeable digital effects Drums: 4/4 rock beats, some double-bass drum setups Lyrical Content: heroic quests, fantasy Fashion: goth, black, fantasy-inspired, long hair Other: keyboards, "symphonic" elements, atmospheric reverb	Blind Guardian, "Battlefield"; Nightwish, "Phantom of the Opera"
New Wave of British Heavy Metal (NWOBHM)	No	Vocals: sung Guitars: distorted with preamp gain Drums: 4/4 rock beats, some double-bass drum setups Lyrical Content: heroic quests, fantasy, the occult, Satan Fashion: long hair, denim, leather, studs	Iron Maiden, "Run to the Hills"; Saxon, "Denim and Leather"
Stoner	No	Vocals: sung Guitars: moderate to heavy distorted from preamp gain Drums: 4/4 rock beats, slower tempos Lyrical Content: marijuana and "stoner topics," blues topics, rock topics Fashion: long hair, jeans and T-shirts, some grunge-adjacent dress	Kyuss, "Demon Cleaner,"; Queens of the Stone Age, "No One Knows"; Sleep, "Holy Mountain

Table A.1: Subgenres of Heavy Metal (cont.)

Progressive Metal	Not exclusively, but can use extreme elements	Vocals: sung, screamed, sometimes without vocals Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain, also featuring clean sections or something entirely different given experimental nature of the music Drums: 4/4 rock beats, double-bass drum setups, jazz influence Lyrical Content: varies widely, often poetic to show intelligence Fashion: varies depending on subgenre allegiances, era	Animals as Leaders, "Physical Education"; Between the Buried and Me, "Ants of the Sky"; Cynic, "Integral Birth,"; Meshuggah, "Bleed"
Thrash, Speed	No	Vocals: sung aggressively Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain Drums: double-bass drum setups Lyrical Content: anger, violence, dystopia, Satan, borderline-extreme content Fashion: jeans and T-shirts, studded or bullet belts	Megadeth, "Peace Sells"; Metallica, "Master of Puppets"; Slayer, "Angel of Death"
Death Metal	Yes	Vocals: screamed, "death growled" Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain Drums: double-bass drum setups, blast beats Lyrical Content: extreme violence, sexual violence, gore, brutality, Satan Fashion: jeans and T-shirts	Cannibal Corpse, "Butchered at Birth"; Deicide, "Sacrificial Suicide"; Dethklok, "Murmaider"
Grindcore	Yes	Vocals: screamed Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain Drums: double-bass drum setups, blast beats Lyrical Content: gore, anti-capitalist Fashion: jeans and T-shirts Other: some songs are extremely short	Carcass, "Vomited Anal Tract"; Napalm Death, "Instinct of Survival"

Table A.1: Subgenres of Heavy Metal (cont.)

Black Metal	Yes	Vocals: screamed Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain Drums: double-bass drum setups, blast beats Lyrical Content: Satan, fantasy Fashion: black leather, black, corpse paint, spiky jewelry Other: atmospheric reverb, often intentionally lo-fi sounding	Bathory, "Massacre"; Darkthrone, "Kathaarian Life Code"; Venom, "Black Metal"
Deathcore	Yes	Vocals: screamed, "death growled" Guitars: heavily distorted with preamp gain, noticeably detuned guitars Drums: double-bass drum setups, blast beats, breakdowns Lyrical Content: extreme violence, sexual violence, resistance Fashion: see "Metalcore" subgenre	Suicide Silence, "You Only Live Once"; Whitechapel, "Prostatic Fluid Asphyxiation"

Resumé

Selected Professional Experience

- Project Manager: Alto Professional (inMusic) – August 2020–Present
- Lecturer: Indiana University – August 2016–August 2018
- Fact Checker: *Journal of Musicology* – October 2015–June 2018
- Teacher in Bassoon at the University of Rhode Island – 2012

Papers Given:

- Iowa Musicology Day, 2022, Remote – "The Hideous Gnosis Conference and Extreme Metal Canonization"
- AMS New England, 2018, Windham, CT – "Forging the Heavy Metal Canon: Extreme Metal, Abject Subgenres, and the 'Post-Extreme' Canon"
- British Forum for Ethnomusicology/Royal Musical Association Research Students' Conference: "Music Inside and Out," 2018, Huddersfield, U.K. – "Subgenre Hierarchies, Canonization, and the Boundaries of Metal Identity"
- MIDSEM, 2018, Bloomington, IN – "Metal Studies and the Boundaries of the Metal Community"
- CUNY Graduate Center for Music Studies Conference, 2017, New York, NY – "'That's Not Metal!': Constructing the Heavy Metal Canon Inside and Outside the Discipline"
- AMS Midwest 2015, Chicago, IL – "Metalcore and the Relative Nature of Mundane and Transgressive Subcultural Capital"

Other Scholarly Work:

- Contributions to A History of Western Music, 9th Edition
  - Research on 20th and 21st centuries
  - Writing assistance on 2-page technology in 21st-century box (p. 998–99)
- Contributions to Norton Anthology of Western Music, 7th Edition
  - Assistance in researching *Poème électronique by* Edgard Varèse

Other Experience/Service

- Rhode Island Wind Ensemble – Board Member, September 2018–May 2019
- President: Indiana University Graduate Musicology Association – August 2014–August 2015

Education

- Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, August 2012–May 2023
  - PhD in Musicology
- New England Conservatory, Boston, MA, September 2008–May 2011
  - MM in Musicology, 2011 – Academic Honors
  - MM in Bassoon Performance, 2010 – Academic Honors
- Oberlin Conservatory, Oberlin, OH, September 2004–May 2008
  - BM in Music Performance