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Functions of Genre in Metal and Hardcore Music

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For my father,
'You are with me, always with me'

Abstract

This thesis addresses various functions of genre in metal/hardcore music as a lens through which to study popular music in the twenty-first century. The thesis proposes that issues of genre are fundamental to understandings of popular music for all participants.

Predominant in metal/hardcore discourse, genre serves as an organising principle in historiographies that exert significant influence upon contemporary perceptions of metal and hardcore. I propose generic symbiosis as a new way to conceptualise the relationship between metal and hardcore, addressing issues of consequentiality arising from extant frameworks. Exploring intra- and intergeneric connections, I observe the relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena that allows a relatively specific group of performance techniques and compositional devices to connote numerous metal/hardcore genres (and vice versa). Within this interconnected model of genre, subgenres provide a middle ground of generic adaptation by providing a focus on specific small-scale phenomena.

Genre may be understood as a general, amorphous concept in flux, while style affords specificity, and their relationship is analogous to that between type and token (where style tokens the genre type). Structured rhizomatically, scenes provide the literal and metaphorical space for such tokening, connecting physical instantiations to abstract notions. The internal rhetorical tensions of mainstream versus underground, and progression versus tradition, are demonstrated to function as a creative apparatus for participants. A manifestation of generic symbiosis, this apparatus provides the mechanism for generic adaptation as participants negotiate these tensions. Through a case study of twenty-first century metalcore, I observe the process of generic codification, outlining how a combination of specific elements of style, emerging from particular scenes, came to demarcate a genre. I show how adaptations within a single genre engender change in numerous other areas of metal/hardcore music culture, underscoring the interconnectivity of genre in popular music.

Introduction

This thesis seeks to investigate popular music in the twenty-first century, utilising metal and hardcore as a lens through which to study issues of genre and the prevalence thereof in contemporary conceptions of music. The thesis proposes that issues of genre – in particular, how they are constructed, perceived, and (re)conceptualised – are fundamental to understandings of popular music for all participants. Conceptions of genre I theorise and discuss are not limited to discourse on metal and hardcore, nor music in and of the twenty-first century, but offer additional tools in the elucidation of popular music. This thesis, then, is concerned primarily with uncovering how metal and hardcore music (and, by extension, popular music) functions in the twenty-first century.

In *Death Metal and Music Criticism*, Michelle Phillipov declares that she is not 'trying to untangle extreme metal's current heterogeneity and the complex interrelations of contemporary subgenres' (2012, p. xvi), instead focusing her study on death metal's 'formative period' (p. xvi). Rather than attempt to 'untangle' heterogeneity or 'complex interrelations' within genres, I conceptualise these aspects of metal/hardcore as the very things to be studied. Any efforts to separate fully relationships between genres would be a fruitless endeavour and, regardless, would be disingenuous: metal and hardcore participants, especially in the twenty-first century, perceive and experience music culture as plural, heterogeneous, and complex. Participants actively produce this intricacy in the act of participation by continually shaping and reshaping genres, styles, and scenes in relation to one another. To this end, I address the metal/hardcore landscape as it exists in the early twenty-first century.

I contend that one must conceptualise genre as active and multifarious; that is, genres (indeed, the very idea of genre) result from and require *active engagement* from all participants in multiple ways and in multiple aspects of a given genre. Genres are not fixed, autonomous entities, nor are they merely abstract labels and categories that interest only pedants. Genres are unstable,

in a state of constant flux, and continually (re)created, (re)shaped, and reinforced by complex networks of participants. Genres are powerful and significant means by which participants interact with and conceptualise music and culture.

Through the course of the thesis, I elucidate the symbiotic relationship between metal and hardcore as indicative of ways in which many (possibly all) musical genres interrelate, alongside uncovering how musical scenes interact rhizomatically, constantly forming and reforming assemblages in flux. The instability of genres, styles, and scenes gives rise to numerous rhetorical tensions that are negotiated and reinforced by various discourses that both inform and are informed by the actions of all participants (artists, listeners, producers, commentators, and critics). Principle among these tensions are those foregrounded in much metal and hardcore: tradition vs. progression, and mainstream vs. underground. Rather than conceptualise these tensions as purely dialectical, I consider them as active agents within a larger narrative of struggle that perpetuates certain divides as an apparatus for creativity. Issues of subcultural capital are ensconced in the active construction of genre norms and narratives, and they are utilised overtly and covertly by participants in constructions of (musical) meaning. This type of musicking is not such a radical departure from that of the past, but the forms it takes and the extent to which it is embedded within the lives of participants has increased since around the turn of the twenty-first century (especially through widespread internet access). It is not my intention to portray genre as the ultimate goal of musical activity, or as something that all musical participants consciously position as essential to musical practice. Rather, I merely seek to investigate how genre constructs both emerge from and, insomuch as participants interact with them, determine (even subtly) such musical activity.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One explores extant discourse on metal and hardcore, situating the thesis in relation to research within metal studies, popular music studies, and musicology. Historical overviews of metal studies and the less cohesive hardcore/punk studies allow me to demonstrate specific areas in which my research operates. Specifically, I highlight three key areas of interest this thesis seeks to address: (1) the separation of metal and hardcore discourse, (2) the relative lack of academic research on metal/hardcore in the twenty-first century, and (3) the often-overlooked significance of non-academic discourse to academic research on metal/hardcore. With this in mind, I briefly outline my epistemology and methodology, circumscribing key terms that are utilised throughout the thesis.

Chapter Two discusses the historiography of metal and hardcore, suggesting its influence upon contemporary perspectives on the genres. The chapter outlines traditional models of metal evolution noting issues arising from consequential frameworks, including conflicting narratives of progression and regression. Addressing the separation of metal and hardcore, the second half of the chapter proposes generic symbiosis as a new way to conceptualise the relationship between the genres. The notion of symbiosis is explored with reference to popular discourse alongside musical examples. Generic symbiosis is proffered as a way to account for metal and hardcore's pluralism evident in the twenty-first century, and serves to underpin the rest of the thesis. The creative conflict outlined as part of the metal/hardcore divide prefigures discussion of rhetorical tensions in chapter five.

Chapter Three investigates the significance of intra- and intergeneric connections within metal/hardcore music culture. Foregrounding the dynamic relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena, the chapter first explicates performance techniques and compositional devices particular to metal/hardcore, before exploring connections among various metal/hardcore genres. The first section of the chapter illuminates some of the micro-level compositional/performance-related details that metal/hardcore participants

engage with (consciously or otherwise). Subsequently, this terminology is used as part of a genre typology that illustrates associations between macro-level details of genres. Finally, I discuss subgenres as providing a middle ground in which the small/large-scale relationship affords generic adaptation through either the mixing of small-scale elements drawn from different genres or the explicit focus upon specific small-scale elements within a single genre.

Chapter Four explores the related concepts of genre, style, and scene. Addressing each in turn, I compare how these terms are utilised by both academic and non-academic commentators, finding that a relatively limited vocabulary has led to, for instance, genre and style terms being used interchangeably. Drawing on literature from various disciplines, I consider the convoluted relationship between genre and style, proposing that the former is a general, amorphous concept in flux, while the latter affords specificity. I suggest that the style/genre relationship might be best understood as analogous to that between token and type, where specific demonstrations of style token the genre type. Reviewing constructions of scene in extant discourse, I delineate several scene types and focuses that are regularly combined by metal/hardcore participants. Scenes provide both literal and metaphorical spaces in which the style/genre relationship can be enacted, and it is the interaction between various scenes in a rhizomatic manner that engenders the adaptability of metal/hardcore.

Chapter Five explores how rhetorical tensions between diverse perspectives of and within metal/hardcore are articulated in the music culture. This chapter proposes that tensions between apparently dissimilar ideologies serve as creative apparatuses for metal/hardcore participants, linking elements of discourse with composition, production, and reception. I explore two broad points of friction: mainstream versus underground, and progression versus tradition. Considering these ostensible dichotomies at various strata, I observe how they inform and reflect one another. The chapter investigates how participants utilise this creative apparatus to conceptualise metal/hardcore as variously homogeneous and fragmented. The apparatus described in this chapter is a manifestation of generic symbiosis, providing the site and the

mechanism for participants to alter conceptions of metal/hardcore as a music culture.

Chapter Six examines twenty-first century metalcore as a case study of interactions between genre, style, and scene. By drawing together strands from throughout the thesis, this final chapter demonstrates ways in which metal/hardcore participants construct and reconstruct genre. I focus on the New Wave of American Heavy Metal as an overt period of generic codification in metalcore, outlining how a combination of specific elements of style, emerging from particular scenes, came to demarcate a genre. Moreover, I discuss the effects of this codification on wider metal/hardcore discourse, altering both historiography and future iterations of the genre. Crucially, I show how adaptations within a single genre engenders change in numerous other areas of metal/hardcore music culture. Chapter six elucidates various functions of genre explored during the thesis by considering them simultaneously, reflecting the experience of metal/hardcore participants.

Chapter One – Metal, Hardcore, and Discourse

To position my original research in the wider context of studies on metal and hardcore, I present a review of pertinent literature both academic and non-academic. In undertaking such a survey, three elements became particularly significant for my study: (1) the establishment of a 'metal studies' research field and subsequent impact upon metal research, (2) the relative separation of academic discourse on metal and on punk/hardcore, and (3) the significance of integrating non-academic literature into any contemporary study of (metal and hardcore) music culture. Reflecting these characteristics of academic metal discourse, I survey texts on metal in a relatively chronological manner. Beginning with those published prior to any semblance of metal studies, I move to a discussion of the concept and research field of metal studies, evaluating the so-called seminal texts alongside those less well known. To supplement my own exploration of metal literature, I utilise online metal studies bibliographies noting the significant texts excluded as well as included. Of particular interest here is the retroactive claims of these bibliographies, citing texts from the 1970s, '80s, and '90s as comprising metal studies, despite the field not existing at that time. Alongside discussion of metal studies, I explore literature pertaining to punk and hardcore, initially separated from metal texts but increasingly analysed together. Punk and hardcore lack the formal academic cohesion of metal studies, but enjoy a volume of non-academic literature that is perhaps more developed than that of metal. Over the course of the review I highlight particular methodological and theoretical trends within these research areas that sometimes cohere, but just as often disagree and fragment. The numerous approaches to these music cultures are expanded further by the inclusion of non-academic discourse and new, particularly online, publishing methods.

Following the section on metal and discourse, I explain briefly my epistemological position to this research before offering some working definitions of terminology used throughout the thesis. Like the discussion of metal and discourse, these definitions serve as a starting point for the arguments put forth later in the study.

It is not my intention to be exhaustive or especially authoritative in either of these sections, nor am I attempting to dismiss or otherwise denigrate the work of others as preliminary. Rather, I attempt to better position my work in relation to multiple academic and non-academic fields of thought and provide some background to my study. More specifically, I wish to at once broaden and further the burgeoning field of metal studies (including discourse outside academia) and highlight connections between metal/hardcore music and studies to wider discussions in the study of popular music and musicology.

Forging Metal Studies

Although metal music has existed in some form since at least the late 1960s,[1] the concept of 'metal studies' is a far more recent notion and the development of that field is more recent still: '[t]he idea of metal studies as a serious proposition dates to the end of the 2000s. […] But the notion of a metal studies discipline was never seriously entertained until 2008' (Kahn-Harris 2011, p. 251). While some scholars claim any text pertaining to metal in some form to be part of the metal studies field (see below), there is merit in reading such works without metal studies in mind. Thus historicised, these texts may be interpreted as snapshots of then current academic understandings of metal music and culture that have since influenced the formation of metal studies. Comparing earlier works on metal and more recent, fully conscious metal studies research will also prove useful in charting the ways in which metal as an academic point of interest and as a music culture has developed, particularly during the last twenty five years.

According to the *Metal Studies Bibliography*,[2] academic texts on metal date back to 1978, but the first major studies into metal in terms of both length and

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[1] Though there is disagreement over the 'first' metal song or band, '[t]here appears to be a strong consensus amongst academics and established journalists that heavy metal and hard rock emerged during the late 1960s/early 1970s in the industrial Midlands of England (for example, Walser 1993: 10, Weinstein 2000: 4 and Christie [*sic*] 2003: 1)' (Cope 2010, p. 7).

[2] This online resource, published by the International Society for Metal Music Studies and based on work by Kahn-Harris and Hein (2006), provides bibliographic entries on books, chapters, journal articles, and dissertations/theses on metal music. Brian Hickam is listed as

influence were not published until the early 1990s. During the interim, books and journal articles on metal appeared sporadically and largely fell into two distinct categories, journalistic guides including biographical information on artists (e.g. Bashe 1985; Leggett 1985), and short academic articles studying purported psychological effects of metal music on its consumers (King 1988). Texts comprising the former group are usually uncritical and appear to be by fans, for fans. Conversely, those in the latter category often view metal in a negative light, warning of the potentially harmful effects the music may have on its presumed young audience. While both betray authors' biases, it is noteworthy that 'until quite recently psychological research into heavy metal, from a variety of perspectives, was the *dominant* research perspective' (Brown 2011a, p. 216; original emphasis).

A key distinction between these early investigations into metal music and literature consciously within metal studies is the isolation in which early scholarship existed. With metal yet to be classified as a formal academic research area, those psychology-based articles were forced to create new methodological approaches or, more commonly, apply already extant ideas to 'new' music (Brown 2011a). Similarly, authors of biographical works were able to choose their subjects without fear of discussing artists already covered by others. Indeed, the lack of prior research allowed these authors more time to discuss the music culture directly, as opposed to feeling the need to address metal studies and ensuring that their research did not unduly contradict commonly held notions in the field.

Early Metal Studies (1990s)

'Three foundational texts ground the scholarly literature' (Wallach et al. 2011a, p. 9) on metal music culture: Donna Gaines' *Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's Dead End Kids* (1991), Deena Weinstein's *Heavy Metal: A Cultural Sociology* (1991),[3] and Robert Walser's *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness* (1993). While Gaines and Weinstein authored 'the first scholarly

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the bibliography's current editor, although the most recent entries date from 2013 (https://www.ucmo.edu/metalstudies/metal_studies_home.html, accessed 5/9/2017).
[3] Later revised and republished as *Heavy Metal: The Music and its Culture* (2000).

books on metal to have significant impact' (Hickam 2015, p. 6), it is Weinstein's work, alongside Walser's, that is more commonly cited as foundational within metal studies (Brown 2011a). As its title suggests, Weinstein's book (1991) is a sociologically-informed view of then-contemporary metal music, including a detailed history of the genre. Weinstein's primary focus is the participants of metal culture, particularly fans, though she also discusses the music (as sonic artefact), iconography, media, and ideology of metal culture, declaring that her 'study is meant to show how heavy metal music is made, used, and transmitted by social groups' (2000, p. 4).

Like previous authors, Weinstein attempts to address metal in its entirety, though she concentrates almost exclusively on English-language (heavy) metal in the US and UK. Similarly, she traces a lineage from rock to metal while largely ignoring the influence of punk and hardcore.[4] Unlike those previous scholars researching metal who espoused a broadly negative view of the genre (Weinstein 2000, pp. 1-3), Weinstein's book offers an 'objective inquiry' (p. 4). Indeed, these texts by Weinstein and Walser 'represent a watershed in the study of heavy metal music and culture because they offer a research perspective that is sympathetic to the values and/or experiences of heavy metal fans themselves' (Brown 2011b, p. 65). Weinstein's book may therefore be understood as one of the first to make use of insider research to further academic study of metal. By implementing a quasi-autoethnographic approach (Spry 2001; Attfield 2011), Weinstein combined two prevalent methodologies, fan/journalistic ethnography (subjective) and academic quantitative (ostensibly striving for objectivity), to good effect.

Walser (1993) offers the first explicitly musicological book-length investigation into metal music including discussion and definition of specific musical techniques and compositional devices unique to or most prevalent in metal music. While Weinstein's study (1991) had foregrounded metal fans, Walser analyses metal composition and performance alongside discussion of common

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[4] Specifically, Weinstein limits her discussion of punk and hardcore to a mention of the influence of punk/hardcore upon thrash metal and crossover (2000, p. 49), as well as observing similarities between punk and metal as resistant youth cultures (pp. 109-110, 114).

themes in metal lyrics. Walser utilises close-reading techniques when analysing stylistic similarities between heavy metal guitarists and Western art composers, comparing Richie Blackmore (Deep Purple) to Antonio Vivaldi, and the technical innovations of Eddie Van Halen (Van Halen) to those of J. S. Bach (1993, pp. 57-107).[5] This more traditional brand of musicology is positioned in tandem with issues of gender and madness that were comparatively new to the study of music. Here, then, Walser presents an examination of heavy metal music that attempts to fuse orthodox musicological methods with unorthodox approaches taken from other social sciences; in so doing, he continues the interdisciplinary perspective proposed by new musicology (Beard & Gloag 2005).

Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (1996) made a point of analysing metal fans rather than the music with which they were engaged, distinguishing his work from previous efforts through an admitted unfamiliarity with and dislike of metal music.[6] Like earlier psychology-based studies, Arnett interprets metal music as a negative form of expression that is harmful to its fans since it exacerbates or even creates an overriding alienation among America's youth. Although his knowledge of metal music and culture is limited when compared to that of Weinstein and Walser, Arnett's research nevertheless expanded metal studies into the study of youth culture and, perhaps more significantly, marks the first serious challenge to those metal scholars who perceive the music as entirely positive or neutral. The latter trait likely clarifies the 'unexplained absence' (Brown 2011a, p. 216) of Arnett's text in Gérôme Guibert and Fabien Hein's survey of metal studies literature (2006).

Concurrent with the rise of hip-hop as a commercial force during the early 1990s, scholarly articles on the supposedly harmful aspects of metal and rap became more frequent (Binder 1993). As part of the growing fields of gender and race studies, book chapters and articles were published on metal

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[5] This chapter expands upon research published in Walser (1992a).
[6] 'I love many kinds of music, but heavy metal is not one of them. In fact, one of the reasons I became interested in it was that I was amazed that anyone could find it appealing' (Arnett 1996, p. xi).

masculinity (Denski & Sholle 1992), white male dominance (Pfeil 1995), and white appropriation of black performance styles (Wells 1997). Academic texts discussed state-sponsored attempts to censor death metal lyrics and iconography (Cloonan 1996), while media attention surrounding Norwegian black metal in relation to a series of church burnings and two murders by scene members provoked journalistic inquiry (Moynihan & Søderlind 1998). The combination of scholarly and media interest had the effect of dragging 'underground' metal into the foreground, highlighting both the variety in metal music and the relatively narrow scope of this early metal research.

Harris M. Berger's study of metal, jazz, and rock phenomenology in Akron, Ohio (1999b) marks the first explicitly ethnomusicological monograph on metal music.[7] Though he draws on previous research, Berger nevertheless places metal firmly within the realm of popular music (alongside rock and jazz), positioning the genre as distinct but not separate from wider popular discourses and practices. Applying a more formal approach than Weinstein (1991), Berger conducts in-depth interviews with participants of Akron's music scene, focusing on the opinions of musicians. This concentration on a precise locale allows Berger to uncover highly specific aspects of that particular scene – e.g. ways in which death metal musicians conceptualised composition (1999b, pp. 200-242) – that were unobtainable in the wider studies conducted by Weinstein (1991) and Walser (1993). Rather than replace the large-scale approaches employed by earlier metal studies, Berger's scenic research provides a new perspective on metal that could be integrated into the metal scholar's repertoire.

Metal Studies Expands (21st Century)
Just as Weinstein's first book (1991) had signalled the beginning of a new decade of metal research, her revised edition (2000) again promoted a view of metal as more than irreverent music for adolescents. Unlike her previous effort, however, this updated text did not exist in isolation as the sole arbiter of metal academia. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, metal studies

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[7] Research based on the same fieldwork was also published as a journal article in Berger (1999a).

became more visible, more versatile, and even gained support from the academy. The volume of journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, and books devoted to metal grew exponentially as the metal studies field gained definition and recognition in the academic community and further afield. Rather than homogenise during this period of crystallisation, metal studies became increasingly diverse, drawing on various academic disciplines as well as integrating non-academic perspectives.

Perhaps the most significant change for research into and of metal music was the introduction of the term 'metal studies'.[8] For the first time, those studying metal music in whatever form had a niche of their own in which to develop their research without feeling the pressure to constantly prove its value. Despite new/critical musicology's postmodern ideal promoting the notion that nothing should be granted inherent value, many metal scholars had previously seemed at pains to justify their research interest. Whether or not metal research required such a defence is perhaps beside the point, but nevertheless there existed the potential for metal scholars to regard their chosen research area uncritically, in an attempt to balance perceived attacks on metal.

Used to refer to an interdisciplinary field of research, specific works within that field, as well as a wider research community, the metal studies moniker demarcated a new way of conceptualising scholarly investigation. Rather than keep separate methodologies and research areas, metal studies makes a conscious attempt to combine as many different approaches as possible, theoretical and physical, to the study of a particular (music) culture. Theories and methodologies from psychology, sociology, anthropology, musicology, politics, gender studies, cultural studies, literary theory, critical theory, and ethnography are positioned in relation to one another, distinct but not separate. Indeed, an objection to academic hierarchy 'was stressed during the opening remarks at the start of each [early metal studies] conference' decreeing that 'all delegates are equal, regardless of degree, vocation, professional position,

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[8] Recent articles on the history of metal studies (Brown 2011a; Hickam 2015) make no claims regarding who coined the term.

publication record or scholarly status' (Hickam 2015, p. 14). Although from the outside metal music culture may seem simplistic or, at least, limited, the charge of metal studies is that the intricacies, (in)coherence, and scale of the music culture can only be properly explicated through combined effort. In this respect, the notion of metal studies is inherently interdisciplinary.

Metal studies has been granted some nominal academic legitimacy through the establishment of the International Society for Metal Music Studies (ISMMS) and subsequent push by its members 'to establish metal music studies as a relevant and respected academic discipline'.[9] As well as providing a notional banner under which metal scholars can congregate and support one another, members of ISMMS organised the first academic conference on metal music, *Heavy Fundametalisms – Music, Metal and Politics*, held in Salzburg, Austria in 2008, an event during which 'metal music and culture studies is generally viewed as having commenced' (Hickam 2015, p. 6).[10] Since then, at least one metal conference has been held annually, many sponsored by ISMMS, with some publishing proceedings (Scott & Von Helden 2010; Hill & Spracklen 2010; McKinnon et al. 2011). Moving to a biennial model for major ISMMS conferences in 2013 has allowed enterprising academics and institutions to hold smaller conferences and symposia focused on relatively specific aspects of metal studies.[11] Special issues of the *Journal for Cultural Research* (15/3, 2011), *Popular Music History* (6/1-2, 2011),[12] and the *International Journal of Community Music* (7/2, 2014) have focused exclusively on metal studies, including articles by prominent metal scholars on the current state of the field

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[9] Taken from the mission statement presented on the society's original website, https://www.ucmo.edu/metalstudies/ (accessed 5/9/2017), and restated on the society's newer independent website (launched October 2016), http://ismms.online/?page_id=2 (accessed 5/9/2017). No founding date for the society is provided.

[10] 'The consensus of the scholars interviewed for this article and myself is that before 2008 we had publications, or studies, on heavy metal, but we did not have "heavy metal studies"' (Hickam 2015, p. 6).

[11] The first of these biennial events was the *Heavy Metal and Popular Music* conference, held at Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, OH) in April 2013. Examples of smaller events include the two-day *Metal Over Metal: Metal Music and Culture from a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective* conference, held at the University of Southern Denmark (Odense, Denmark) in December 2015, which stressed the significance of the Nordic region in metal music culture, and the one-day *Metal (&) Musicology* symposium, held at the University of Hull (UK) in March 2016, which focused on intersections of metal studies and musicology.

[12] Later collated and published as Hjelm et al. (2013).

(Spracklen et al. 2011; Kahn-Harris 2011). The *Metal Music Studies* academic journal (first published 2015) and *Helvete: A Journal of Black Metal Theory* (first published 2013)[13] afford more regular publication of metal/hardcore research, complementing the ever-growing body of metal/hardcore monographs.

Metal research can be found more frequently in journals on popular music (Pieslak 2008; Burns 2008), sociology (Waksman 2004a), cultural studies (Smith 2011), cinema (Tompkins 2009), and even short articles in medical journals (Patton & McIntosh 2008; Drew 2009). Issues of gender and race have also proved fertile areas of inquiry for metal scholars, particularly constructions of gendered boundaries (R. L. Hill 2011; Overell 2013), elisions of gender and power (Krenske & McKay 2000), the experiences of female performers and fans in extreme metal (Kitteringham 2014), and the promotion of fascist ideologies in some strains of metal music (Hochhauser 2011). Indeed, '[i]f the years 1984-91 were the golden years of metal music – commercially speaking, at least – […] then the 2010s mark not just the emergence, but an explosion in the academic study of metal' (Hjelm 2017, p. 117).

Concurrent with the increased volume of metal studies research, metal scholars have been examining more specific elements of the music/culture, analysing compositional practices of particular artists (Pieslak 2007; McCandless 2013), and investigating contemporary recording and mixing practices (Berger & Fales 2005; Mynett 2011, 2013). Commercially successful metal bands like Metallica and Black Sabbath have been used as the focal point for academic volumes on philosophy (Irwin 2007), musical identity (Pillsbury 2006), and the early history of heavy metal (Cope 2010). Metal's global presence has been recognised by various scholars producing research on metal in Brazil (Harris 2000), Indonesia (Baulch 2003), and Turkey (Hecker 2012), alongside edited collections on metal around the world (Wallach et al. 2011b) and in the UK (Bayer 2009).

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[13] It is worth noting that some proponents of 'black metal theory' stress its separation from metal studies (see, for instance, Wilson 2014), but the existence of these publications is nevertheless an example of a growing acceptance of metal music/culture within academia.

As highlighted by Bettina Roccor (2000), by the turn of the millennium, metal music had diversified and fragmented into various genres.[14] This process has not only continued but, arguably, accelerated during the early twenty-first century. During this time, scholars in metal studies have attempted to address these subgenres as research areas unto themselves, rather than mere offshoots requiring a few paragraphs in a larger study of metal in general. Keith Kahn-Harris's widely cited monograph on extreme metal (2007) – loosely defined as encompassing black metal, death metal, grindcore, and doom metal – provides an analysis of these subgenres in relation to one another, while Natalie Purcell (2003) and Phillipov (2012) focus exclusively on death metal. Although books by Weinstein (1991) and Walser (1993) are 'classics of the field', Kahn-Harris's (2007) text 'was a massively influential work that updated the study of metal music and focused on the less commercial aspects of the culture (Hjelm 2017, p. 117). The impact of Kahn-Harris's writing, referenced throughout the thesis, is such that his 'work on metal is now a foundational point of reference on par with Weinstein and Walser' (Hjelm 2017, p. 118).

The development of a metal studies 'field' afforded a variety of approaches, perspectives, and attitudes toward the music and research thereof. Indeed, the deliberate and concerted interdisciplinarity with which metal studies is conducted allows sociologists to discuss theories derived from musicology and apply them to anthropological research, for instance. Significantly, then, the primary factor connecting these scholars and their research is metal music culture and the (apparent) drive to further its study, rather than a shared academic background. It is therefore unsurprising that metal studies research is conducted around the world by scholars working within many different disciplines and academic departments. While the majority of metal studies texts are published in English, there is a growing body of research in other

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[14] On the one hand, '[e]ach type of heavy metal has developed its own system of signs made of music, symbolism, clothing and behavior' (Roccor 2000, p. 87), while on the other hand 'heavy metal continues to represent itself to the outside world as a closed cultural system' (p. 89).

languages,[15] and the aspects of metal under discussion are becoming more diverse. It is testament to metal studies' conception of metal as more than just music as sonic artefact that musicologists are a minority within the field, though this may betray continued traditional perspectives in musicology. Though academic texts on metal have been published for decades, 'it is in the 2010s that we can really begin to talk about "metal studies" as a recognizable and recognized field of research' (Hjelm 2017, p. 117).

Hardcore and/or Punk Studies[16]

While academia took some time to address (heavy) metal music, punk music culture grabbed the attention of scholars comparatively quickly. Emerging over a decade after the University of Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (established in 1964), punk served as an obvious area of interest for nascent cultural theorists, especially those working in subculture studies, toward the end of 'the great years of the CCCS during the 1970s' (Webster 2004, pp. 854-855). One of the first, and likely most famous, scholarly undertakings on punk was conducted by CCCS alumnus Dick Hebdige in his book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979). Hebdige analyses punk as a case study of youth subculture, paying particular attention to the visual style of its participants, punk's status as 'resistant', and the process of bricolage. Dave Laing's *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (1985) espoused a different approach toward the analysis of punk, examining the genre through the lens of postmodernism. Laing explores the subject matter of punk's lyrics and band names, as well as describing some performance practices, focusing on punk musicians rather than fans. From an ethnographical perspective, the anarchic ethos of much British punk seemed easily linked with earlier counterculture movements of the 1960s and '70s, providing another site for the construction and maintenance of 'real punks' (Fox 1987). Conceptualisations of punk in relation to youth cultures are a common theme in much punk scholarship (Debies-Carl 2014, pp. 17-42), despite more recent

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[15] The *Metal Studies Bibliography* includes texts in French, German, Italian, and Swedish, as well as English.

[16] Unlike 'metal studies' there appears little consensus on a specific term for academic engagement with punk and hardcore, but for my purposes the title given should suffice.

work arguing that 'youth phenomena are characterized by fluid, fragmented identities, shifting and overlapping boundaries, relatively low levels of commitment, and little concept of authenticity' (2014, p. 28). In this vein, punk may be better understood not in relation to practice, but, as Lars J. Kristiansen et al. (2010) suggest, a loose philosophy.[17] Like metal, punk now has its own academic journal, *Punk & Post-Punk* (first published 2012), and the Punk Scholars Network organise annual conferences on the music culture.

In one of the earliest academic investigations of hardcore, James R. McDonald (1987) analyses lyrical themes of then-prominent bands, noting the dominance of politically motivated aggression. Susan Willis (1993) employs hardcore as a case study to research American subculture, similar to Hebdige's use of British punk, in an attempt to update and localise contemporary subcultural theories. Ross Haenfler's (2006) in-depth ethnographic account of straight edge in Colorado mixes analyses of scene, resistant youth culture, and youth movements.[18] As a former scene member, he combines auto-ethnography with participant observation and interviews to uncover both positive and negative effects of straight edge values. Haenfler conceptualises straight edge and hardcore as inextricably linked, analysing hardcore lyrics in relation to the opinions and actions of its fans. Despite previous assumptions that hardcore is merely a subset of punk and that straight edge is only one facet of hardcore, Haenfler uncovers vastly different perspectives on multiple issues within that hardcore community. Notions of family, unity, and, particularly, strength of will are prominent in the responses of those interviewed and reflected in the lyrics and iconography of many (straight edge) hardcore bands.

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[17] '[A] punk philosophy can be said to encompass the following ideals: nonconformity, DIY practices, the never-ending questioning of authority, educating the self so that the individual can break the chains of false-consciousness, rejection of structures of power, belief in the good of humankind (hoping that social evolution can be facilitated), and rejection of common sense' (Kristiansen et al. 2010, p. 145).

[18] 'The basic tenets of sXe [straight edge] are quite simple: members abstain, completely, from drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and usually reserve sexual activity for caring relationships, rejecting casual sex' (Haenfler 2006, p. 10). I discuss straight edge as an ideological focus of hardcore scenes in chapter four.

Construction of identities within and without hardcore youth culture is the subject of research by Brian J. Kochan (2006) and Joe Mageary (2012), both examining the role of do-it-yourself (DIY) ethics espoused by hardcore bands. Like Haenfler, these authors question the idea that participation in a hardcore (or punk) subculture is a transitional phase in the development of young adults. While they agree that the vast majority of visible hardcore participants fall within the category of youth, these scholars note the lasting effects such participation can have on former scene members and ways in which individuals tailor their level and type of involvement as they grow older, a view supported by Andy Bennett (2006). Like metal, issues of gender and race in hardcore have received some academic attention. Siri Brockmeier (2009) provides a thorough exposition of gendered experience in hardcore, analysing lyrics and imagery alongside participant interviews. Her research explicitly demarcates hardcore as 'a thoroughly masculine subculture' (p. 67) that conforms to many common notions of male hegemony despite a sizeable female fan base, not unlike metal (Walser 1993). The appropriation of hardcore visual style and spaces by homosexual communities, and the subsequent 'queering' of the genre, are discussed by David Ensminger (2010), adding a different perspective to discourse on gender in hardcore.

Most academic examinations of hardcore fall under the rubric of sociology and (sub)cultural studies, including work on hardcore scenes in Asia (Mueller 2011) and the role of straight edge tattoos as a visual indicator of philosophy (Atkinson 2003). David Easley (2015) examines 'riff schemes' of early hardcore bands including Minor Threat and Black Flag, but there remain relatively few explicitly music-analytical studies of hardcore. That said, research into hardcore audience practices (Tsitsos 1999), the in-studio (re)creation of hardcore authenticity (Reyes 2008), and an ethnomusicological study of Tokyo hardcore (Matsue 2009) has moved scholarly engagement with hardcore within the realm of musicology.

Although punk grabbed the attention of academia before metal, the latter genre has enjoyed the most scholarly engagement more recently. Academic investigations of hardcore have been few and far between, but have become

more common during the twenty-first century. Perhaps as a result of the increased popularity of hardcore and recognition of the close relationship between hardcore and metal, elements of hardcore discourse have infiltrated metal studies. Those discussing grindcore acknowledge the significant influence of hardcore music (Overell 2014), while work on metal scene formation (Baulch 2007; Wallach & Levine 2013) often makes use of scene research from punk and hardcore studies. For the most part, though, metal academics are yet to fully acknowledge the place of hardcore in metal, however this is not necessarily reflected in non-academic research (as I explore in chapter two).

Metal Studies, Hardcore Studies, and the Non-Academic

A vital element of both hardcore and metal studies in the twenty-first century is the inclusion of and relationship with non-academic, journalistic, and fan-based research. Whereas earlier scholars investigating metal had little choice than to utilise journalistic guides and histories of metal, academics within metal studies now choose to interact with this type of research and vice versa. Books by Ian Christe (2003), Albert Mudrian (2004, 2009), and Essi Berelian (2005) on metal, as well as texts on hardcore by Brian Peterson (2009), Steven Blush (2010), and Tony Rettman (2014) provide useful research comprising interviews, first-hand accounts, and opinions that can supplement or be the basis of more academic investigation. Andy R. Brown observes 'the emergence, from the 1990s onwards, of academic-fans (established scholars who have "come out" as fans of types of popular culture) and fan-academics (ex-fans who have successfully parleyed their insider knowledge into an academic career)' (2011a, p. 217), but there are also a number of non-academic participants – journalists, bloggers, musicians, producers, fans – whose valuable contribution to metal studies has been recognised and encouraged during the twenty-first century.[19]

There is a growing body of research that exploits the author's position as a non-academic (thus affording them the position of proper insider) to obtain

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[19] Designating such scholarship as 'non-academic' is not intended to devalue this type of research, but to distinguish it from analyses conducted by scholars working in, supported by, and usually publishing through academic institutions.

information that may otherwise be missed. The kind of anecdotal evidence and occasional supposition employed in various histories of metal and biographies of artists may seem antithetical to supposedly objective academic research, but this non-academic research is nevertheless useful to the metal scholar. The acceptance of journalistic and fan research within academic discourse may be inspired in part by its necessity within earlier metal research (when academic texts operated largely in isolation), but the conscious interdisciplinarity of metal studies demands that academic and non-academic perspectives be of equal value, in theory if not always in practice. Indeed, *Metal Music Studies* welcomes contributions to the journal 'as an academic or a fan or an insider' (Spracklen & Scott 2015, p. 3).

The numerous histories of metal established in works by Christe (2003), Mudrian (2004), and Jon Wiederhorn and Katherine Turman (2013), to name only a few, provide the academic researcher with first-hand information gleaned from interviews with artists, record label employees, concert promoters, record producers, and DJs. The perspectives expressed in these texts are vital given that this type of access may only be granted to those perceived to be avid fans of music, rather than the stereotypical academic who seeks to belittle metal participants. Encyclopaedias of metal music (Phillips & Cogan 2009; Bukszpan 2012) provide details on genres, artists, record labels, and iconography, while some deliberately tongue-in-cheek journalistic texts (Abrams & Jenkins 2013) proffer explicit value judgement ('The Best Metal Albums EVER!') or satirise the concept of classification within metal ('Completely Unnecessary Heavy Metal Subgenres'). The 'guides' to metal and various subgenres proffered by Berelian (2005) and Garry Sharpe-Young (2003, 2005, 2007) serve as examples of largely unreferenced but potentially widely read metal scholarship. These texts generally comprise lists of bands ordered alphabetically, chronologically, or by subgenre, with each listing including some biographical information and maybe even the author's suggestion of the artist's 'best' work. While such texts are non-academic by design, they offer an insight into the ways by which metal may be categorised and characterised by the average fan, since fans constitute the intended readership. Alongside the overt canonising of artefacts by Martin Popoff (2004) and Mudrian (2009), these guides tell readers which artists

should be discussed and, by way of proposing a generic/stylistic grouping, *how* they should be discussed and interpreted.

Perhaps more so than in metal studies, hardcore researchers have relied on the work of fans/journalists to provide accounts of the movement and stylistic evolution of hardcore. Not unlike death metal during the 1980s and '90s, hardcore has long enjoyed and promoted a status as an 'underground' genre, deliberately hostile to outsiders and their presumed agendas (an idea discussed further in chapter five). Ian Glasper utilises his position as a long-time genre participant to conduct in-depth interviews with prominent scene members in his histories of UK hardcore (2009, 2012). Brian Peterson's (2009) examination of US hardcore during the 1990s, mixing discussion of straight edge and vegetarianism with artist interviews and profiles, is another text that benefits from the informal auto-ethnography of its author. Similarly, Michael Azerrad (2001), Blush (2010), and Rettman (2014) all use their access to members of the various hardcore scenes they explore to provide a picture of American hardcore during the 1980s.

Metal and hardcore studies have also benefited from researching metal journalism and fan discourse as a way to analyse the modes by which metal participants discuss and conceptualise the music culture. Research by Brown (2007) examines the potential power of metal press to structure fans' tastes and vice versa, while Hélène Laurin (2013) analyses the perception of metal fans in the metal and rock presses. J. Patrick Williams and Heith Copes (2005) analyse the construction of online identities through fan interaction in online forums on hardcore and straight edge, and Josh Heuman (2013) examines relationships between users of online archival hardcore blogs.[20] In so doing, academic researchers seek to explore ways in which metal and hardcore participants engage with the music culture on a daily basis, going some way to bridging the gap between academia and non-academia.

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[20] 'As an ideal-type, archival blogs post complete rare or out-of-print releases as historical recovery, while journalistic blogs post a few songs from recent releases, perhaps for a limited time, to supplement critical review' (Heuman 2013, p. 179).

Metal magazines, webzines, and online blogs[21] have, with increasing regularity, engaged with metal studies research, academic or otherwise. Webzines like *Metal Sucks*, *Metal Injection*, *Death Metal Underground*, and *Invisible Oranges*[22] commonly post opinions on (Neilstein 2013) and reviews of (Stevens 2014a) metal studies research, as well as publicising conferences and other elements of metal academia.[23] More recently, there has been an attempt to integrate academic research and sections of the online metal community, such as Kahn-Harris's series of articles written for and published through politics and culture website *Souciant* (Kahn-Harris 2013), then discussed at length on *Invisible Oranges* (D. Moore 2013b). Having mentioned *Invisible Oranges* in one of these articles, Kahn-Harris confirms his position as an academic who engages with journalistic/fan discourse. Another salient example is provided in an academic journal article by Tamás Tófalvy (2014), in which the author cites comments posted by users of the metal news website *Lambgoat* in his discussion of purportedly online-based metal subgenres. *Lambgoat* subsequently posted about Tófalvy's article (Lambgoat 2014), generating new comments and thereby continuing the discourse from which the article took inspiration.

Though they are relatively understudied in academic research (a situation this thesis will hopefully begin to redress), metal and hardcore magazines, webzines, blogs, and social media serve as highly visible sites of metal discourse and are therefore valuable to the metal studies scholar. Online articles can prove particularly interesting since they often allow readers to comment, furthering the discussion. While the study of online communities and their potential value for academic research is hardly new (Kibby 2000), the didactic nature of many metal webzines and blogs may serve as a special case. Moreover, websites like *Metal Sucks*, *Invisible Oranges*, and *Heavy Blog is*

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[21] My distinction between webzines and blogs is based on the potentially outdated notion that webzines comprise a group of paid employees, while blogs are run by unpaid fans of the music as a hobby. The distinction is not intended to convey any value judgement, merely recognising that both contribute to metal/hardcore discourse.

[22] http://www.metalsucks.net/; http://www.metalinjection.net/; http://www.deathmetal.org/, http://www.invisibleoranges.com/ (all accessed 5/9/2017).

[23] Metal news website *Blabbermouth* has publicised both metal conferences (Blabbermouth 2013) and short university courses on metal (Blabbermouth 2015).

Heavy habitually deliberate on similar issues found in academic research.[24] Conceptions of genre (Kelly 2012), the particularities of specific subgenres (Kupermintz 2014), histories of subgenres (Sergeant D 2011a), potential ethical issues in metal (Neilstein 2014b), lyrical themes (D. Moore 2013a), and performance practices (Rosenberg 2014a) are all discussed at length by both authors and readers of these websites. *Death Metal Underground* and *Metal Descent* proffer multiple in-depth subgenre histories, including discussion of scenic ideologies, lyrical themes, and contemporary societal issues, within a larger history of metal music.[25] Online articles written by prominent metal and hardcore musicians like The Ocean guitarist Robin Staps (2013), ex-God Forbid guitarist Doc Coyle (2014), and Terror vocalist Scott Vogel (2015a), suggest that some performers participate directly in this discourse. Indeed, it is this wide-ranging and relatively democratic type of discourse that is yet to be integrated within metal and hardcore studies, to the detriment of academic endeavour. To this end, the integration of both academic and non-academic discourse espoused by the present thesis is part of a logical continuation of an interdisciplinary approach.

Metal and Hardcore Studies Going Forward

Despite the proliferation of metal and hardcore studies both academic and non-academic during the twenty-first century, there is comparatively little research pertaining to metal and hardcore music of and in the twenty-first century. The majority of book-length metal texts primarily analyse the music culture up until the end of the twentieth century, perhaps reflective of specific instances where metal genres were especially popular in mainstream music charts (as with thrash during the mid-1980s; Weinstein 2000) or conspicuous in moral panics (Moynihan & Søderlind 1998). A similar situation can be identified in hardcore literature where many texts focus exclusively on the genre during the 1980s (Blush 2010; Rettman 2014) or '90s (Peterson 2009; Glasper 2012). However, metal and hardcore have continued to thrive in the twenty-first century, undergoing innumerable transformations to exist in more guises and locations

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[24] http://www.heavyblogisheavy.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).
[25] http://www.deathmetal.org/faq/; http://metaldescent.com/metal-genres/ (both accessed 19/7/2017).

than ever before. As Roccor (2000) observed at the beginning of the new millennium, the balancing of metal's fragmentation and unification produces a constant stream of new subgenres, scenes, and styles alongside reinterpretations of older styles. The technological advances of the early twenty-first century appear to be exacerbating this evolutionary process, as well as granting easier access to older metal and hardcore artefacts (through digitisation and online streaming, for instance). Rather than any specific strategy of avoidance, the academy's ostensible lack of interest in this period of music culture may simply be a result of researchers yet to catch-up with recent developments in metal and hardcore (and popular music more generally).

Of particular significance during the early twenty-first century is the continued and accelerating symbiosis of metal and hardcore.[26] With its roots in various genres of the 1980s, principally thrash metal, grindcore, and crossover, the relationship between metal and hardcore has progressed from an intermingling to that of interdependence. As the most obvious example of this connection, metalcore has variously been portrayed as metal-influenced hardcore (Haenfler 2006) and hardcore-influenced metal (Weinstein 2000), but its twenty-first century variant is decidedly *both* metal and hardcore. Given those (sub)genres that have either emerged or gained prominence since the turn of the century that take as their base a fusion of metal and hardcore – deathcore, mathcore, melodic hardcore, post-hardcore – it is surprising to observe the relative paucity of academic research in this area.

One of the few academic scholars to approach the admixture of metal and hardcore, Steve Waksman has discussed 'generic crossover' between metal and punk as far back as the 1970s (Waksman 2004b), asserting that links between the two genres are older than many suspect. His study of Californian hardcore and heavy metal during the early 1980s (Waksman 2004a) emphasises ways in which technological 'tinkering' was used to construct seemingly antithetical notions of virtuosity in metal and artistic independence in

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[26] See chapter two for an explanation of generic symbiosis in metal and hardcore.

hardcore, highlighting the similarities between the two positions. The first monograph on the combination of metal and punk (including hardcore) (Waksman 2009) furthers the author's previous research to explain how metal and punk have been linked historically, and continue to be related aesthetically.[27] A more recent academic text to consider metal and hardcore groups them under the banner of 'aggression' (Abbey & Helb 2014), noting one of the primary aesthetic elements shared by the genres. Chapters discussing metal lyrics and vocal styles (Elovaara 2014) are placed alongside issues of religion and nationality in hardcore (Helb 2014), suggesting their relation on a spectrum, rather than strict separation. Journalist and academic Laina Dawes (2012) explores contemporary issues of gender and race in metal and hardcore, since experiences of black women as a subordinated group are broadly similar within both genres.

Although these texts represent a tiny minority of metal and hardcore studies, they nevertheless suggest that hardcore is beginning to be discussed alongside metal in the twenty-first century. In spite of the relative youth of academic metal studies when compared to popular music studies, for example, some metal scholars are acutely aware of the need to question their own methods and assumptions. The *Journal for Cultural Research*'s special issue on metal (15/3, 2011) includes short articles by prominent metal researchers on the current state of metal studies, noting 'the still problematic relationship of metal scholarship, metal fandom and the academy' (Spracklen et al. 2011, p. 211). Deena Weinstein warns against 'definitional battles', advocating acceptance of 'all the various self-designations of metal, regardless of whether they originate with fans, adversaries, critics, journalists, promoters, artists or scholars' (2011, p. 244). According to Kahn-Harris, 'undoubtedly the most critical weakness in metal studies at it stands [is] the relative paucity of musicological analyses on metal' (2011, p. 252), and he stresses the importance of avoiding metal studies becoming too insular in its theories and methods. Brian Hickam interviews several prominent metal studies scholars for the first article in the inaugural

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[27] Waksman considers the genres as linked by a 'metal/punk continuum' (2009, pp. 1-18), discussed further in chapter two.

edition of *Metal Music Studies* (Hickam 2015), reinforcing a self-reflexivity within the field evidenced in previous work by Brown (2011a, 2011b). The general consensus, then, is that researchers in metal studies must avoid limiting themselves and their research area, whilst retaining the drive to learn more about metal in all its forms. This thesis is thus an attempt to further understanding of and in metal, including an updating of methodology and subject matter. Rather than conceptualise metal and hardcore as insular, the thesis positions these interconnected genres in relation to other forms of popular music by observing intersections of rhetoric, theory, and practice.

Simultaneous with the growth of metal and hardcore during the twenty-first century has been an expansion of texts available to the metal participant and, therefore, the metal scholar.[28] Here, text is taken to mean anything that can be read; that is, anything that can be experienced, interpreted, and conceptualised regardless of medium and transience. Within music, since the beginning of the twentieth century, the most obvious texts have been audio recordings, either physical or digital, created wholly in a studio or documenting a live event. Video artefacts have become increasingly significant since the 1980s, now encompassing music videos, live performance videos, interviews, lessons, documentaries, and play-through videos.[29] The availability of audiovisual recordings as DVDs/Blu-rays, digital media, on YouTube and other video streaming websites is such that people the world over can access more varied content than ever before. Print magazines and webzines provide news, commentary, and promotion, catering for diverse niches and subgenres. Blogging and social media allow for anyone with internet access to share their thoughts with whomever will read them and share various digital artefacts for free.

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[28] This is not to suggest that the metal scholar is not a participant, merely that the designation 'metal scholar' denotes a specific type of participation (see pp. 32-35 for an explanation of my use of 'participants').

[29] Most commonly found on video streaming websites like YouTube, play-through videos usually depict a single instrumentalist of a band performing a given song at home or in a studio (e.g. Monumentsonline 2013). Play-through videos may be distinguished from music videos primarily through their lack of visual narrative or exaggerated performance gestures, and common use of audio recorded from the individual performance rather than the studio artefact. I have written about them previously in Kennedy (2013).

Crucially, metal and hardcore participants experience music and culture differently during the twenty-first century than at any time before. The ability to participate in larger discourses, potentially affording communication with artists, producers, and critics, has fundamentally altered the ways in which fans engage with metal and hardcore music culture, but it has also affected the music culture itself. The ability for all participants to cherry pick multiple aspects of metal and hardcore affords new levels of customisation of experience. Similarly, the amount and type of information pertaining to specific artists, record labels, (sub)genres, compositional forms, performance practices, analytic theories, and academic and non-academic studies, has led to more participants with a detailed knowledge of metal/hardcore.

These changes have resulted in, among other things, a blurring of the distinction between producer and receiver, artist and audience, critic and fan, academic and non-academic. This newer, more fluid conception of musical experience demands examination and re-evaluation of previously held norms and practices. Metal studies' penchant for self-reflexive critique is arguably reflective of wider practices and perspectives in twenty-first century metal/hardcore. The self-referential aspect of metal and hardcore music culture, including scholarship, combines with supposed 'reflexive anti-reflexivity' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 145) to create a genre that promotes progression and conservatism simultaneously, locating creativity within the tension between these extremes.[30]

In light of this, the present thesis sets out to accomplish two primary goals: (1) to redress some critical imbalances of metal scholarship by offering a thorough explication of metal music culture during the early twenty-first century, by recognising the interdependent relationship of metal and hardcore during this

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[30] 'If unreflexivity is "not knowing better" and anti-reflexivity is "not wanting to know", then reflexive anti-reflexivity is "knowing better but deciding not to know". Reflexive anti-reflexivity can therefore be defined as anti-reflexivity practised by members who are capable of producing reflexive practice within the reflexive space of the scene' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 145). Though this a key theme throughout the thesis, I discuss tensions between progressive and traditionalist rhetoric directly in chapter five.

time, and by expanding the scope of metal and hardcore studies to highlight these genres relationship(s) with other music/cultures; and (2) an attempt to align scholarly readings of metal and hardcore with those of participants, deliberately obscuring boundaries between various experiential domains, acknowledging the (potential) significance and fluidity of genre, style, and scene in participants' perception, and examining how metal and hardcore reflexivity is manifested by artists and fans alike. In so doing, the thesis seeks to continue the expansion and refinement that metal and hardcore studies have undergone since the turn of the century, contributing to research on these genres as well as popular music generally and, potentially, further afield.

Researching Metal and Hardcore

As has become common in scholarship of the arts and social sciences, I fully acknowledge my long-held interest in metal and hardcore as a fan, one-time performer/composer, and contributor to discourses. As a musicologist, the attraction to study metal and hardcore in an academic setting is due in part to a distinct lack of metal studies in musicology and of musicology in metal studies, but is also a result of what I perceive as a potentially fertile area of inquiry owing to the supposed tension between metal/hardcore and everything else. The premise of the thesis, therefore, is to synthesize these two types of knowledge and experience to better understand metal/hardcore music culture from both an academic and non-academic perspective. Such an approach is not uncommon within scholarship of popular music (Thornton 1995; Krims 2000) or metal studies, with Kahn-Harris noting that his connection to extreme metal as both a fan and academic, 'moving back and forth from critical insider to sympathetic outsider' provides 'the ideal (shifting) standpoint from which to conduct research' (2007, p. 5). Brown's distinction between 'academic-fans' and 'fan-academics' (2011a, p. 217) is perhaps best suited to what we might call 'first-generation' metal academics (e.g. Weinstein 1991; Walser 1993) who often felt the need to defend metal music culture as an area worthy of scholarly consideration. The continually broadening scope of the arts and social sciences, along with persistent efforts to expand cross- and inter-disciplinary practices, allows academics like me to study areas that may once have been

labelled frivolous. As such, my admitted fandom of metal/hardcore music should not indicate a favourable bias; rather, my experience of and participation within this music culture permits and compels me to interrogate critically the dynamic relationship between cultural discourses and practices.

This thesis locates metal/hardcore within the myriad other forms of popular music, not to diminish the idiosyncrasies of the genre but to recognise the suitability of metal and hardcore to investigations of generic function. Further research may suggest that models of genre espoused in this thesis can be applied productively to, say, hip-hop or electronic dance music, but it could also be that, for whatever reason, genre in metal/hardcore functions atypically.

The vast majority of artists and labels discussed during the thesis are based in the United States of America or the United Kingdom. This apparent preference for English-language, Anglo-American music is based on nothing more than my personal experience of metal/hardcore music: most bands I listen to and have seen perform live are Anglo-American, though some mentioned in the thesis are from continental Europe, Asia, and Australia. I do not presume that the analyses and perceptual frameworks proposed in the thesis will be readily applicable to metal/hardcore outside the US or UK, nor do I preclude the possibility.

Key Terms

Metal/Hardcore in the Twenty-First Century

The inclusion of both metal and hardcore in the thesis's title and throughout this text is deliberate. Chapter two explains more fully my reasons for discussing metal *and* hardcore, casting them as related symbiotically, but here I provide a brief explanation for this specific terminology. Multiple academic and non-academic texts on metal utilise the term 'heavy metal' (e.g. Weinstein 1991; Walser 1993; Christe 2003; Berelian 2005), but my preference for simply 'metal' is twofold. First, heavy metal does not refer to all forms of metal music – both Kahn-Harris (2007) and Phillipov (2012) make distinctions between 'heavy metal' and 'extreme metal' – and is instead commonly employed in reference

to specific forms of metal, especially prominent prior to the mid-1980s.[31] Second, and related, the use of metal as a catchall for various diverse genres with some relation to earlier heavy metal is widespread within both academic and non-academic discourse. Reflected in the name of the International Society of Metal Music Studies, as well as in the names of websites like *Metal Sucks* and *Metal Archives*, metal is accepted as a general term. Of course, this can lead to some confusion when artists claim they are a metal band, as opposed to identifying with specific genres or subgenres, but this ambiguity can provide an interesting site for generic negotiation. My use of the term metal is therefore intended to be inclusive of all genres that are identified or perceived as derivative of metal since at least the early 1970s, while reflecting common parlance within cultural discourses.

My preference for 'hardcore' as opposed to 'hardcore punk' is based similarly in my experiences of both academic and non-academic vernacular. Hardcore historiographies by Peterson (2009), Blush (2010), and Rettman (2014), as well as academic studies by Haenfler (2006) and Eric Abbey and Colin Helb (2014), note the significance of punk in the formation and continuation of hardcore, but nevertheless proffer key differences between the two genres. My use of hardcore is not intended to diminish the continued influence of punk, but to recognise hardcore's relative autonomy from punk since the mid-1980s and subsequent flourishing as its own genre. As I argue in chapter two, the relationship between hardcore and metal has become closer than that between hardcore and punk, especially during the twenty-first century. Discussing hardcore as a standalone form should thus imply the multifarious nature of hardcore music culture, acknowledging again the creative potential of ambivalence when 'hardcore' is ascribed to an artist, artefact, or genre.

The inclusion of both metal and hardcore makes explicit my contention that the two genres cannot be discussed independently, especially when considering their twenty-first century iterations. Explored more fully in chapter two and

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[31] Differences between terms like 'heavy metal' and 'extreme metal' are explained more thoroughly as part of the metal/hardcore genre typology in chapter three.

underpinning the entire thesis, I conceive metal and hardcore as linked symbiotically since at least the mid-1980s. Such a view precludes discussing one without the other, although many scholars academic or otherwise will refer to only metal or hardcore, and from time to time I highlight differences between elements commonly perceived as metal or as hardcore. That said, I frequently employ the term 'metal/hardcore' to highlight the dynamic relationship between these genres, avoiding one taking precedence over the other.

Although I discuss twentieth century metal/hardcore at length throughout the thesis, my broad focus on music culture in the twenty-first century is, in part, born out of a recognition of the comparable lack of academic research on metal and hardcore during this period. While the formative years of various genres have become sites of interest for scholars in academia (Phillipov 2012) and outside (Rettman 2014), the ways these genres function and are perceived in the twenty-first century is less well-developed. Furthermore, the topography of the metal/hardcore landscape has continued to shift since the turn of the millennium, with some genres gaining newfound popularity and ascribed significance, while others no longer enjoying the prominence they once did. In addition to those genres that 'crystallized' (Weinstein 2000, p. 9) prior to the year 2000, genres like djent and deathcore may be understood to have emerged during the twenty-first century (albeit with earlier antecedents), while genres like metalcore have undergone significant changes in everything from compositional/performance-related elements to associated lyrical themes. Received narratives about genres and retrospective ascription of significance to specific artists or geographic/temporal scenes have a substantial effect upon the ways in which genre functions in twenty-first metal and hardcore. By investigating metal/hardcore's 'third wave' (Weinstein 2015)[32] I aim to elucidate the pluralism of musical experience during the twenty-first century in which participants have easier access than ever to a seemingly endless stream of

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[32] 'Metal's Third Wave began at the turn of the present century in tandem with the mass use of the internet, the bursting of the dot.com bubble, the adoption of the Euro, and the destruction of the symbolic World Trade Tower in lower Manhattan on September 11, 2001' (Weinstein 2015, p. 15).

generic artefacts and discourses, able to cherry pick aspects of various genres, styles, and scenes without claiming full allegiance to any one perspective.

Participants

Throughout the thesis, I reference and discuss the views of various people involved in some way with metal/hardcore music culture. More specifically, I utilise published interviews with artists, artists' management and tour crew, artists' friends and family, record label owners and employees, producers and engineers transcribed in print or presented in video and/or audio, as well as words published by critics, journalists, bloggers, fans, and academic scholars working in metal (some self-proclaimed 'metal scholars', some not). Some of this discourse is cited directly in the form of quotes or indirectly in paraphrase, but I have attempted to draw conclusions in part from engaging with this type of discourse over the last six or so years (including writing, formal research for the PhD project was conducted over a four-year period). For the most part, I clarify precisely the status of a cited commentator, however this clarity cannot always be guaranteed for two reasons: (1) distinctions between different types of engagement with music culture – between artist and audience, blogger and critic, between the opinions of an isolated fan and an inadvertent online trend setter – are continually blurred by the very act of engagement, and (2) related to this blurring of distinctions is the coming together of what one might call schools of thought on certain aspects of metal/hardcore such that trends may be observed from discourse in multiple formats among people involved in the genre in various roles. In short, the issue to be addressed is balancing specificity with generality; that is, specifying a person's role(s) within metal/hardcore music culture to a degree that is neither misleading nor simplified, while also avoiding generalising to the point of homogenisation. Journalistic histories of various metal and hardcore genres or geo-temporal scenes often comprise interviews with participants interwoven with narratives proffered by the author. In this thesis I discuss these multifarious accounts together, recognising the power of both lauded artist and ostensibly neutral scribe to shape the reader's view.

To best translate the multifaceted nature of participation in metal/hardcore music culture, I use the term 'participant' throughout the thesis to refer to people in some way related to, involved with, and part of metal/hardcore music culture. A metal/hardcore participant could therefore be a composer, performer, listener, concert-goer, producer, record label A&R,[33] critic, academic, or some combination of these roles. The level and type of participation is not specified directly by my use of participant, rather it is used to recognise that there is no strict hierarchy between the so-called diehard fan and the casual listener, for instance, and to acknowledge the potential for one person to enact multiple roles within the culture. This is not to say that the opinion of a casual listener commenting on a metal/hardcore commentary website is received by a reader as holding the same level of significance or authority as the criticism of a well-known metal journalist, but, particularly through the use of social media, people both within and outside metal/hardcore culture have the ability to influence that culture. Similarly, participant acknowledges the flexibility inherent within social groups, deliberately avoiding fixing a participant's role(s). While it is accurate to cite Devin Townsend, for instance, as one-time guitarist and vocalist for Strapping Young Lad, he has also been a member of other bands, released music as a solo artist, served as record producer for several metal albums, and is undoubtedly a fan of metal/hardcore music culture. In this sense, unless referring explicitly to a specific album produced by Townsend, it may be most accurate to acknowledge his position as a long-time participant when citing his views.

While the term is reminiscent of ethnography, my use of participant is not intended to cast me or anyone else as an 'observer'. Rather, like ethnographic work on metal/hardcore by Berger (1999), Haenfler (2006), and Matsue (2009), I recognise that the commentary and analysis presented in this thesis comprises a part of wider cultural discourses within metal and hardcore, and perhaps further afield in popular music more generally. In this sense, the

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[33] 'A&R stands for artists and repertoire. In a record company A&R personnel are responsible for a) recruiting musician-artists, b) supervising the development of their public image, c) coordinating record-making with record producers and artists' (Toynbee 2000, p. 164). See also Stratton (1982).

dichotomy of participant and observer is deconstructed as participation and observation become one and the same. More specific terms used by metal/hardcore scholars to refer to people involved in some way with the music culture include 'scenester' and 'sXer' (Haenfler 2006),[34] 'metalheads' (Arnett 1996), and, most commonly, 'fans' (Weinstein 2000). References to metal fans or metalheads suggest a self-identification on the part of the people in question, and while many participants would have little issue with this implication, I do not want to dismiss outright perspectives from those who may not define themselves as metal fans. Referring to scene members, scenesters, or sXers, may intimate a level of participation beyond that of a regular fan, requiring more effort and expense: '[a] "scenester" was someone who rarely missed a show, had heard all of the latest bands, and who may be involved in booking shows, playing music, or publishing a 'zine' (Haenfler 2006, p. 22). Despite the multiple roles subsumed within these terms, there is an inevitable connotation of exclusivity that prides one participant over another. It is undeniable that scenesters, for instance, may accrue more (sub)cultural capital than a casual fan, especially in genres that are promoted as underground, but their functions in the development and maintenance of these music cultures are not necessarily more important than those of less visible participants.

The term 'participant' also recalls what Eric Smialek calls 'Derrida's notion of genre participation rather than belonging' (Smialek 2015, p. 58). Despite its focus on physical texts, the concept of generic participation outlined in Jacques Derrida's *The Law of Genre* (1980), is useful here as it allows 'a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set' (1980, p. 59). Instead of the more exclusive, labour-intensive connotations of scenester or metalhead, participant affords precisely this kind of distant interaction and engagement with metal/hardcore. Just as '[s]traight edge individuals only occasionally refer to themselves as "straight edgers"' (Haenfler 2006, p. 221), I recognise that few metal/hardcore participants would refer to themselves as such. Regardless of the level of

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[34] Haenfler abbreviates 'straight edger' to 'sXer' when referring to members of straight edge hardcore scenes (2006, p. 221).

participation, however, anyone and everyone who experiences metal/hardcore music culture in some way (from watching a video on YouTube to releasing music as a band through a record label) is participating in the *active* construction and maintenance of metal/hardcore music culture.

Genre, Subgenre, Scene, Style

The relationship between notions of genre, style, and scene form the basis of chapter four (discussed in relation to theories of genre from popular music and metal studies), however the use of these terms throughout chapters two and three requires some circumscription. Genre relates generally to the totality of music-related elements within metal/hardcore music culture, including but not limited to sonic artefacts and phenomena, live performance events, iconography, discourse, and reception. In this sense, I share Kahn-Harris's 'holistic approach' (2007, p. 11) to genre, and while recognising Justin Williams's efforts to 'direct attention on the intra-musical discourse to balance better its relationship with other extra-musical discourses' (2009, p. 22), my study is underpinned by aspects of Eric Clarke's conception of ecological theory (2005) that considers the intra-/extra-musical distinction redundant since both domains inform one another. More than as a category within which musics may be placed, genre acts as a framework for composition, performance, iconography, ideologies, and discourse that is utilised by participants to shape their experience of both production and consumption of music culture. The significance of genre within perceptions of music culture, particularly in metal and hardcore, is explored more thoroughly in the rest of thesis, but to pre-empt claims made later in this study, my basic conception of genre is an active construct in flux, created by cultural participants in the act of participation.

I refer to metal and hardcore as genres as well as exploring genres *of* metal and hardcore (e.g. death metal or metalcore), perhaps suggesting a designation more akin to Roy Shuker's 'meta-genre' (2008), though he joins Allan F. Moore (2001a, 2001b, 2012) in defining metal as a subset of rock as distinct from pop. By discussing black metal as a metal genre as opposed to a subgenre, for instance, I attempt to negate the complexity that arises when one

notes the multiple subgenres of black metal. A subgenre might be most readily conceived as a genre title with the addition of a qualifier, often as prefix (post-black metal or technical death metal) but occasionally as suffix (doomcore). Discussed in this way, both author and reader are better able to negotiate the myriad subgenres, microgenres, and other niche groupings within metal and hardcore.

Style is perhaps most readily appropriated for different ends within both popular and academic discourse, variously used as a synonym for genre or to refer to a specific element of, for instance, performance practice. Acknowledging the work of musicologists like Moore (2001a, 2001b, 2012), discussed in chapter four, I employ style in chapters two and three when delineating one or more smaller elements of, say, metal/hardcore composition. In this respect, my use of style is less general than genre but nevertheless deliberately ambiguous to avoid essentialising certain timbres or melodic phrases as inherently bound to one genre or another, even if such connotations may exist for a listener.

As a related term, scene may refer to participants confined primarily to a specific geo-temporal location (e.g. the Boston hardcore scene), music originally emanating from a particular geo-temporal location (New York hardcore), or what might be otherwise referred to as a relatively fixed style that has connotations to a certain geo-temporal location (the Gothenburg sound). Conversely, scenes may also refer to wider networks of participants and artefacts at the national (Danish hardcore) or global level (the death metal scene). Scene is thus related to aspects of genre and style in a relatively fluid fashion interrogated in chapter four.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this opening chapter was to establish the position of the thesis in relation to metal/hardcore discourse, as well as providing insights into my epistemology and methodology. Through conducting a review of extant academic literature on metal and on hardcore, it became apparent that while research in this field is more recent than that on other music cultures, it is

nevertheless already well-developed. Several significant texts published in relative isolation during the late 1980s and, especially, the 1990s (Weinstein 1991; Walser 1993; Berger 1999b) offered both compelling interpretations of metal music and, in so doing, highlighted the considerable potential for further research in this area. It was only toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century that academic inquiry on metal music coalesced into a recognisable field in the form of metal studies. Since around 2008, after the first international conference on metal music and culture, academic research on metal has proliferated, expanding into numerous disciplines with researchers based across the globe. That said, certain areas within the field remain under-explored. Of particular interest for this thesis is the current scarcity of academic literature that investigates both metal and hardcore, along with the comparative lack of scholarship pertaining to this music culture in the twenty-first century.

A potential remedy for this condition may be found in non-academic metal discourse that frequently considers metal and hardcore in relation to one another, and regularly pertains to twenty-first century music culture. The breadth of this discourse, comprising journalism in the form of books, magazines, webzines, and blogs, as well as fan content in the form of videos, social media, and forum posts, allows the academic researcher to access many diverse perspectives on the experience of metal and hardcore. However, rather than positing an exploration of metal/hardcore journalism or a survey of related online forums, this thesis seeks to integrate both academic and non-academic discourse. Such an approach affords a reflexive study of metal/hardcore insofar as it acknowledges various modes of engagement with the music as articulating different aspects of experience. Comparing academic literature on a given artist or artefact with that drawn from non-academic discourse uncovers moments of accord and disagreement, ostensibly endorsing or problematising theories espoused in either domain. Indeed, as I discuss during the chapter, increased communication between academic and non-academic areas, especially since the realisation of metal studies, has led to a blurring of clear boundaries among different forms of scholarship. Moreover, the literature review presented in this chapter strongly suggests that while there are points of disparity between academic and non-academic discourses, some key themes emerge from each.

One of the most prominent elements of literature on metal and hardcore is the presence of genre. The notion of genre is invoked in superficially simple terms to circumscribe the music culture in question, to demarcate that culture in relation or in opposition to another culture, pertaining broadly to people, practices, places, events, and ethos. But genre also appears frequently in a much more complex and varied sense when it is understood as expressing some form of identity, when used as a tool of intricate classification, or when utilised as a method to interpret experience. My focus on genre throughout this thesis is thus a reflection of the construct's central role in metal/hardcore discourse. Having established its significance in extant literature, I embark on an investigation into the various ways genre functions in the experience of metal/hardcore music culture in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Two – Historiography and Symbiosis[35]

Throughout the thesis, I focus on contemporary metal/hardcore partly as a recognition of the influence of the genre's past on its present. Indeed, the historiography of metal/hardcore is very much present in contemporary discourse, comprising a significant body of literature in books, magazines, and online. The continued use of general narrative tropes in this history, and their relevance to present understandings, might suggest that metal/hardcore participants see such tropes not as impractical simplifications that engender confusion, but as contestable ideas that stimulate discussion and disagreement. The frequency of participants debating which bands are and are not deathcore, for instance, or even what constitutes deathcore as a genre, indicates a sustained interest in the processes of classification (Brackett 2016).

This chapter investigates the historiography of metal/hardcore, highlighting some of the ways by which constructions of the genre's past impact upon contemporary conceptions of the genre. The accrual of mundane subcultural capital through extensive knowledge of artists and genres (Kahn-Harris 2007) is but one of many means by which metal/hardcore participants ensure the sustained presence of metal/hardcore's past. Whether communicated through prose or illustrated taxonomies, metal/hardcore historiography is often presented in a broadly chronological manner, and sometimes further arranged by genre. This mode of presentation tends to result in constructions of metal/hardcore history as consequential. In other words, individual genres are often represented as developing in a unidirectional manner, separate from one another, and demarcated by apparent generic lifespan. Some participants interpret this consequentiality as indicative of a music culture in a continual state of progression, potentially subordinating older artists and artefacts, but other commentators suggest that metal/hardcore has been in a state of regression since reaching an artistic peak sometime in the past.

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[35] An earlier version of parts of this chapter was published in Kennedy (2015).

Many genre histories regularly construct metal and hardcore as separate entities that interact only at a few key points in their otherwise discrete evolutions. I propose the notion of *generic symbiosis* as a way to address both the pluralism in traditional historical models of metal and hardcore, and the sustained intertwining of metal and hardcore since at least the 1980s. Overt symbiosis is explored in relation to first crossover, then metalcore, noting how different narratives promote variously the separation or confluence of metal and hardcore. The notional divide between metal and hardcore constructed by some participants functions as a creative apparatus for bands to operate within a narrative of resistance to either an artificial distinction between the two genres or to a supposed dilution of one genre by the other. Finally, I suggest how the notion of generic symbiosis functions in fluid conceptions of genre in the twenty-first century. The concept of generic symbiosis outlined herein then underpins discussion of metal/hardcore throughout the rest of the thesis.

Tropes in the Historiography of Metal/Hardcore

The historiography of metal/hardcore comprises various narratives put forth in academic and popular texts, including books, magazines, and websites, as well as, perhaps more covertly, in the iconography and music of metal/hardcore artists. In any (music) culture, participants position new artefacts in relation to those already extant, but metal/hardcore has a propensity for continuously referencing and reiterating the influence of the past on the present. While this may be less overt in some ways than the literal 'autosonic borrowing' of hip hop (Williams 2009) or up-and-coming jazz musicians 'proving' themselves by performing jazz standards (Whyton 2010), there is nevertheless an impulse for metal/hardcore artists to be simultaneously innovative and reverent to previous innovations.

History and/as Subcultural Capital

The majority of texts concerning the history of metal/hardcore serve not only to give contemporary fans information about their preferred genre(s), but function equally as tomes of reification. Books with authoritative subtitles like *The Complete Headbanging History of Heavy Metal* (Christe 2003) and *The*

Definitive Oral History of Metal (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013) profess to inform the reader about the genre's past in its entirety, leaving little room for contestation. More specific writing on *The Improbable History of Death Metal and Grindcore* (Mudrian 2004), *The Nineties Hardcore Revolution* (Peterson 2009), and *New York Hardcore 1980-1990* (Rettman 2014), seek to provide the reader with historical accounts of particular genres and/or temporal and geographic scenes, suggesting a level of intricacy or significance not captured by broader histories. *The Rough Guide to Heavy Metal* (Berelian 2005) and *25 Extreme Metal Masterpieces* (Mudrian 2009) are explicit works of canon formation, inculcating readers with a sense of reverence and, more significantly, direct connections between the genre's past and its present.

Similar rhetoric can be found in magazine features like *Metal Hammer*'s 'The Ultimate Guide to Metal' that informs readers of the importance of a certain artist, as well as suggesting particularly crucial songs from the artist's repertoire (e.g. Everley 2012). Metal and hardcore websites frequently publish articles on specific subgenres (Tiernan 2015) and retrospectives on albums deemed particularly significant to the history of metal and hardcore (Rowella 2015). The volume of this discourse suggests that a working knowledge of specific artefacts as well as broader narratives in the genre are crucial aspects of metal/hardcore fandom. Phillipov supports this position in academic discourse by devoting most of her book on death metal to relatively early death metal bands who 'provided the sonic blueprints for a range of contemporary extreme metal styles', her study focusing on the 'formative period in which the genre's musical and lyrical conventions were most clearly codified' (2012, p. xvi). While her intention may be to expand the admittedly limited academic relationship with early Anglo-American death metal, Phillipov implies that in order for one to understand 'complex interrelations of contemporary subgenres' (2012, p. xvi), one must first explore earlier incarnations of that genre. While this kind of didacticism is evident in many other genres – Scott DeVeaux notes that prominent jazz magazine *Down Beat* 'carried articles providing historical perspective, and persuaded many to accept and even admire earlier styles' (1991, p. 537) – extensive knowledge of metal/hardcore history plays a significant role in the accumulation of capital.

Following the work of Pierre Bourdieu on 'cultural capital' (1986), Sarah Thornton describes '"hipness" as a form of *subcultural capital*' (1995, p. 11; original emphasis) within the 'club cultures' (p. 3) of electronic dance music. Applying this theory to fans of extreme metal, Kahn-Harris distinguishes between 'mundane subcultural capital and transgressive subcultural capital' (2007, p. 121).[36] Participants may claim mundane subcultural capital 'by knowing the complex histories of the scene and by having heard the music of its vast number of bands. [...] Knowledge of the historical development of extreme metal canons is extremely important to scene members' (2007, pp. 122-123). Given that '[n]ew (generally young) members entering the scene are frequently disparaged [...] seen not only as ignorant – precluding them from mundane capital – but also as slaves to "trends" – precluding them from transgressive capital' (2007, p. 130), there is a clear incentive to accrue subcultural capital in order to be accepted by other participants. Participants can consult websites like *Encyclopaedia Metallum* for comprehensive lists of artists and releases, or *Metal Descent* for histories of individual genres.[37]

Not limited to fans, this form of 'embodied' subcultural capital (Thornton 1995, p. 11), 'most effectively displayed through knowledge of individual bands and albums' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 123), is demonstrated as a key part of metal/hardcore practice during interviews with artists. Colin McGuire (2014) interviews members of several bands who discuss the influence of The Dillinger Escape Plan's *Calculating Infinity* (1999) on more recent metal/hardcore, noting the album's impact on the genre and expressing the opinion that 'this record and this band in general are underappreciated' (Such Gold vocalist/guitarist Brent Guirtwite in McGuire 2014). In so doing, these artists promote the notion that a proper appreciation of contemporary metal/hardcore requires detailed knowledge of older genres, artists, and artefacts. The Devil Wears Prada

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[36] 'Mundane subcultural capital is accrued through a commitment to the collective. In contrast, transgressive subcultural capital is claimed through a radical individualism, through displaying uniqueness and a lack of attachment to the scene' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 127). Tensions between these forms of capital are explored later as part of chapter five.

[37] https://www.metal-archives.com/; http://metaldescent.com/metal-genres/ (both accessed 5/9/2017).

vocalist Mike Hranica discusses the significance of Converge on his own lyrical practice as part of *Metal Hammer*'s monthly feature, 'Why I Love…', in which a musician discusses his/her admiration for a given band: 'If I'm writing lyrics and get writer's block then Converge are one of the bands I can go to for inspiration' (in Hill 2015b). More direct connections between current bands and their influences are the focus of the *Heavy Blog is Heavy* feature 'The Anatomy Of' (Handmaker 2015c). Shining vocalist/saxophonist Jørgen Munkeby is unambiguous when discussing links between his band's music and that of other metal/hardcore artists, referring to the middle section of 'Exit Sun' (2:44-3:03, *Blackjazz*, 2010) as a 'tribute riff' to Meshuggah (in Rowe 2015).

This highly specific example of subcultural capital regarding metal/hardcore composition is mirrored in the detailed band histories that constitute the bulk of artist documentaries on DVDs by bands like As I Lay Dying (2009) and The Ocean (2013). Through interviews with current and former band members, record label owners and A&R, promoters, and friends and family, these documentaries typically construct a narrative that portrays the band as becoming increasingly professional and commercially successful, while still retaining the youthful exuberance and 'ethos' of many metal/hardcore participants. The inclusion of amateur-shot footage of early Killswitch Engage gigs and interviews with band members' parents in the documentary 'From the Bedroom to the Basement' (Killswitch Engage 2005) humanises the band as regular people, as opposed to the polished performers commanding a sold-out crowd as depicted in the live performance portion of the DVD. Released by the bands' record labels, the majority of these documentaries construct narratives in which the artist in question are innovators pioneering a genre (Killswitch Engage 2005), or defending a tradition from appropriation (as in Century Media 2012). These narrative tropes appear frequently in historical accounts of metal and hardcore, some more explicit than others, and affect the way participants engage with metal/hardcore by forming part of an embodied subcultural capital.

Although the accumulation of (mundane) subcultural capital through generic knowledge and experience is evident in other genres,[38] some scholars suggest the phenomenon in metal/hardcore is idiosyncratic. Personifying Kahn-Harris's mundane subcultural capital, Nicola Allett's extreme metal 'connoisseur' 'exhibits knowledge and mastery of a subject […] which include[s] extreme metal music history, genres, underground bands, instruments, music labels, and terminologies' (2013, p. 172). Indeed, Smialek observes that 'having merely heard the music is not enough to gain recognition as an insider within metal circles', since acquiring mundane subcultural capital 'involves having assimilated the music in great detail, developing a deep knowledge of bands and albums as well as an awareness of which bands and styles have gained respect and which have not' (2015, p. 35). Since '[t]he current routinization of the extreme in popular culture has involved the appropriation of the musical sounds and visual markers of extreme metal' (Allett 2013, p. 179), metal/hardcore participants may feel the need to distinguish themselves from those who simply enjoy the music in its appropriated form. Connoisseurship thus serves variously as 'a form of distinction work within the scene, a defence of policing authorities outside the scene, a form of identity-work in late-modern times, and a strategy that is ever-more significant in the current turn to the extreme' (Allett 2013, p. 179).

Consequentiality

If a detailed knowledge of genre historiography constitutes one of the primary means by which a metal/hardcore participant may accrue mundane subcultural capital, it seems imperative to analyse those texts espousing a history of metal/hardcore. In so doing, it becomes apparent that a principal issue with much of this literature is what we might call *consequentiality*.[39] Recalling something of a 'causal narrative' (Whyton 2010, p. 129), in which 'jazz is still largely promoted and understood as a music with a causal and compartmentalised history' (p. 130), consequentiality highlights problems with metal/hardcore historiography that strives to present the music culture in a

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[38] As demonstrated by Thornton (1995) for electronic dance music, and Krims (2000) for rap.

[39] My thanks to my PhD supervisor, Dr Mark Slater, for suggesting this term.

chronological manner, often dividing the process by genre. Chronological flowcharts of metal (Christe 2003, pp. viii-xi) and of hardcore (Haenfler 2006, pp. 218-219), along with metal histories ordered by genre in relation to chronology (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013; Stevens 2014b),[40] often present metal/hardcore as consequential insomuch as genres beget other genres in a unidirectional fashion, subordinating older genres, and keeping genres separate. While this may be an inadvertent result of the authors' preferred modes of presentation, it is nonetheless significant for the metal/hardcore participant engaging with this material.

Eric Smialek identifies similar issues in metal/hardcore historiography, devoting a chapter of his PhD thesis to analysing five 'existing genre taxonomies of metal music' (2015, p. 32).[41] Smialek considers these taxonomies as 'a playing field for the contestation of mundane subcultural capital' (2015, p. 36), since they allow the author to demonstrate his/her capital in writing the history, while also affording fans the opportunity to demonstrate their capital in the act of critiquing that history. Chronological taxonomies by Sam Dunn (2005) and Fabien Hein (2003) are criticised for their unidirectional nature (Smialek 2015, pp. 36-45), in which older genres influence newer genres but not vice versa,[42] and for the related issue of genres being strictly separated from one another (pp. 47-49).[43] By contrast, Eric Lestrade's (2001) taxonomy is praised for including both 'genealogical branches [and] a number of tangents that point to a genre label without examples' (Smialek 2015, p. 58), allowing for relationships between

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[40] Wiederhorn and Turman (2013) focus each chapter of their metal/hardcore history on a single genre, listed somewhat chronologically and presented with a specific timeframe: e.g. 'Caught in a Mosh: Thrash Metal: 1981-1991'. The history section of Brett Stevens' 'Heavy Metal F.A.Q.' (2014b) is presented similarly: 'Speed Metal, Proto-Underground and Thrash (1981-1987)'.

[41] Taxonomies '(listed in order as they appear in this chapter): Sam Dunn's "The Definitive Metal History Family Tree" (2005, rev. 2011), Fabien Hein's "Arbre phylogenetique du metal" (2003), Mike Hill's "Metal Subgenre Popularity Index" (2008), Eric Lestrade's "History of Metal: And some other related musics..." (2001), and Nick Grant and Patrick Gilbraith's [sic] "Map of Metal" (2010)' (Smialek 2015, p. 32).

[42] Smialek (2015, pp. 39-40) notes that bands like Slayer and Metallica, labelled as thrash metal by Dunn and Hein (as well as many other metal historians) have both released albums influenced by the more recent nu metal genre: Slayer's *God Hates Us All* (2001), and Metallica's *St. Anger* (2003).

[43] Smialek cites a well-known passage by Frederic Jameson, who observes that '*pure* textual exemplifications of a single genre do not exist [...] because texts always come into being at the intersection of several genres' (Jameson 1982, p. 322; original emphasis).

genres based on elements other than 'chronological lineage' (p. 58). Smialek is most impressed with Patrick Galbraith's Map of Metal,[44] an interactive website depicting metal genres as inhabiting space on landmasses of varying size, since it offers 'a record of how current metal fans remember the past by stabilizing and organizing stylistic relationships that would have been opaque or completely invisible at the time' (Smialek 2015, p. 59). Unlike the other taxonomies Smialek analyses, Galbraith's map provides a bird's-eye view of the connections between metal/hardcore genres, avoiding the unidirectional succession of chronological models, but nevertheless still illustrating genres as fixed and separate (especially in cases where the genres do not share a landmass).

A result of consequentiality in both illustrated taxonomies and prose-based histories is the construction of genres as discrete entities that inhabit distinct spaces at a given time. In dedicating each chapter to a single genre, Wiederhorn and Turman (2013) construct a history of metal/hardcore in which genres are artificially separated, mirroring the graphic arrangement of discrete genres in Dunn's taxonomy (2005). In each example, the interrelated nature of metal/hardcore genres is undermined. Organised on branches of Dunn's 'Heavy Metal Family Tree' (2005), genres appear 'unable to "move" horizontally in such a way as to establish creative and productive interrelationships. […] Rather, their position is final' (Stagoll 2010, p. 14), conforming to Gilles Deleuze's critique of arborescence (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 3-25).[45] A similar issue arises from Wiederhorn and Turman's practice of assigning specific timeframes to various metal genres, suggesting, for instance, that death metal had a lifespan of 1983-1993 (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 459). Instead of considering genres as simply alive or dead, we might posit a more nuanced conception in which activity takes prominence. Employing Mark Slater's 'two-type ontology' that 'incorporates both actions and objects, musical work and musical works' (2016, p. 176) allows us to reconcile differences between Julian Dodd's type/token theory (2007) and Christopher Small's

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[44] http://www.mapofmetal.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[45] Though I cite a single text, Deleuze's 'criticism, and his use of the [arborescent] schema, is scattered across his corpus' (Stagoll 2010, p. 14).

musicking (1998).[46] While death metal may have appeared somewhat inactive after 1993 when compared to the previous ten years (to use Wiederhorn and Turman's example), acknowledging that genre encompasses both actions and objects affords the possibility that artefacts from the genre's original period of activity may yet encourage musical activity at another time or in another place. Thus, despite assertions that '[a] genre dies when so few musicians write music that they identify as a part of said genre that its canon ceases to meaningfully expand' (D. Moore 2012b), an apparent lack of musical action at a given time is indicative of a genre that is merely inactive, surviving through the continued existence of recorded artefacts.

Progression and Regression

Constructions of narrative and tradition in music history have received particular attention in the academic field of jazz studies. Texts by Scott DeVeaux (1991), Krin Gabbard (1995a, 1995b), and Tony Whyton (2010) explore the relationships between the discourses of jazz history and present practice. DeVeaux's widely-cited analysis of jazz historiography highlights the various narratives and counter-narratives constructed and sustained by both contemporaneous critics and historians alike. As in metal, 'the conventional narrative of jazz history is a simplification that begs as many questions as it answers' (DeVeaux 1991, p. 526), and various tropes in the historiography of jazz are also evident in histories of metal and hardcore.

> The 'jazz tradition' reifies the music, insisting that there *is* an overarching category called *jazz*, encompassing music of divergent styles and sensibilities. These musics must be understood not as isolated expressions of particular times or places, but in an organic relationship, as branches of a tree of the trunk (DeVeaux 1991, p. 530; original emphases).

The similarities between historiographies of jazz and of metal/hardcore are striking insomuch as both genres tend to promote themselves as unique and somewhat autonomous. Indeed, some 'central themes of the jazz tradition (for example, jazz is an autonomous artform, jazz is not popular music, jazz is an

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[46] Dodd's type/token theory is explored in further detail in chapter four (pp. 146-151).

unmediated performance art, jazz has an authentic lineage, and so on)'
(Whyton 2010, p. 132) are reflected in metal/hardcore histories that utilise
models analogous to those found in jazz history. Dunn's 'Heavy Metal Family
Tree' (Dunn 2005) is reminiscent of the arborescent language employed by
DeVeaux, and an organicist metaphor is employed in the title to Dunn's follow-
up, *Metal Evolution: The Series* (Dunn 2012).[47] The notion of generic evolution
can easily morph into the oversimplified idea that from an initial foray, each
subsequent development is interpreted as improving the genre somehow,
casting the older form as more basic or unrefined. In this vein, Phillipov
positions Venom's *Welcome to Hell* (1981) and Slayer's *Reign in Blood* (1986)
as two of death metal's 'most important precursors' (Phillipov 2012, p. xv).
Significantly, she contends that 'Venom's music was raw and abrasive, with
Cronos's harsh vocals providing the basic blueprints for death metal (and later
also for black metal)' (p. xv). Here, Phillipov encounters 'one of the fundamental
problems in the writing of [music] history: the stigma of inferiority or
incompleteness that the notion of progress inevitably attached to earlier styles'
(DeVeaux 1991, p. 540). As in jazz, some historiographers of metal/hardcore
reconcile this issue by treating 'the achievements of a handful of innovators as
potentials—musical ideas that serve as the "seeds" for later development'
(DeVeaux 1991, p. 541; original emphasis), suggesting that the 'harsher and
more gravelly vocal timbres' (Phillipov 2012, p. 75) utilised by bands like
Motörhead and Venom instigated a 'trajectory of increasingly abrasive vocal
styles' (p. 75) within extreme metal.

A counterpoint to this narrative of continual progression is presented by those
commentators who conceptualise metal/hardcore as in a state of regression
from an earlier zenith. Authors for the metal commentary website *Death Metal
Underground* frequently proffer their view that '[m]etal is in a slump and has
been since 1994, in quality' (Stevens 2015), an idea supported in 'The Heavy
Metal F.A.Q.' section of the website that includes a history of heavy metal that

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[47] Though first proposed in *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* (Dunn 2005), the 'Heavy Metal
Family Tree' was updated first in the television series *Metal Evolution* (Dunn 2012) and, more
recently in the web series *Lock Horns* (Banger 2015a).

is generally negative regarding metal post-1995.[48] Like supposed crises in jazz (DeVeaux 1991, p. 543) and Western art music (Treitler 1989, p. 124), metal/hardcore's state of regression is commonly attributed to an 'abundance' (Kahn-Harris 2013) of bands (and listeners) none of whom are innovating, instead trapped by the condition of 'hyper-stasis', a 'paradoxical combination of speed and standstill' (Reynolds 2011, p. 427).[49] Faced with a music culture apparently experiencing a sustained decline, the regular narrative constructed in the articles on *Death Metal Underground* and *Old Disgruntled Bastard* venerates older artists and recordings (Old Disgruntled Bastard 2014),[50] or belittles newer metal/hardcore bands by comparing them unfavourably to older artists (Death Metal Underground 2015). There is a sense in which a utopian view of metal in a state of continual progression *demands* this counter-narrative, in part to reinforce the notion that older bands and genres are not necessarily inferior to newer genres, and in part to inculcate newer participants into broad cultural narratives of metal and hardcore.

Separation of Metal and Hardcore

A trope particularly dominant in much historiography of metal and hardcore promotes the two genres as independent from one another, sharing few if any influences, fans, spaces, or ideologies. For the most part, metal studies' interaction with hardcore has been fleeting and peripheral, while frequent mentions of hardcore are more prevalent in non-academic texts. Brown's survey of metal studies literature (2011a) includes only two references to hardcore, both concerning the apparent division between mainstream and underground strains of metal. The journalistic histories of metal offered by Christe (2003) and Wiederhorn and Turman (2013) give some space to discussions of hardcore, and position the genre as significant within the development of metal. That said, Christe's discussion of hardcore and crossover (2003, pp. 172-189) is highly historicised, pertaining mainly to the

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[48] http://www.deathmetal.org/faq/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[49] 'Hyper-stasis can apply to particular works by individual artists, but also to entire fields of music. It describes situations in which potent musical intellects engage in a restless shuttling back and forth within a grid-space of influences and sources, striving frenetically to locate exit routes to the beyond' (Reynolds 2011, p. 427). Kahn-Harris articulates a similar phenomenon as part of metal music's 'crisis of abundance' (2013).

[50] https://olddisgruntledbastard.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

mid-to-late 1980s, and is positioned in direct relation to metal. While reflective of the cross-pollination between metal and hardcore during the 1980s, the inclusion of the latter genre seems designed primarily as a means to explain metal's expanding palette at this point in history. By noting metal's apparent acceptance of hardcore's anti-mainstream ideology, do-it-yourself ethos, and overtly political lyrics – in short, hardcore's authenticity – Christe leaves the genre behind, its purpose of imbuing metal with certain favourable traits now served. Wiederhorn and Turman provide a more in-depth discussion of hardcore/crossover and metalcore (2013, pp. 557-614), perhaps reflecting developments surrounding metal in the decade between the releases of the two books.

Blush's (2010) comprehensive study into American hardcore during the 1980s includes infrequent mentions of metal,[51] while Rettman (2014) includes a chapter discussing metal mixing with hardcore during the mid-1980s in New York, exploring the early years of crossover (pp. 235-245). In a model similar to Christe, metal functions principally as a somewhat momentary digression allowing hardcore to extract from metal specific elements before going their separate ways. By contrast, Peterson's (2009) history of American hardcore during the 1990s, told mostly through entries on specific bands, makes frequent mention of the influence of metal on hardcore. Many of the artists interviewed note at least a liking for metal music, if not an overt impact on their composition and performance, but the inclusion of a band often understood to straddle the line between metal and hardcore, Earth Crisis, might suggest a less explicit separation of metal and hardcore during the 1990s. Haenfler's (2006) auto-ethnography of the straight edge movement offers one of the few academic treatments of hardcore. Espousing scene-based analysis, Haenfler mentions metal, crossover, and metalcore as they initially encroached upon and subsequently expanded the scope of straight edge. Matsue (2009) utilises a similar approach in her ethnographic study of underground hardcore in Tokyo,

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[51] See, for instance, Blush's discussion of New York hardcore and crossover (2010, pp. 213-221).

noting the significance of active participation in the production and performance of a scene distinct from 'mainstream' culture.

A recent edited volume by Abbey and Helb (2014) is notable as one of the only academic texts to place discussion of hardcore alongside that of metal, joined here as a result of their shared proclivity for aggression. By including chapters on metal lyrics and on hardcore attitudes, the book reflects a larger convergence over the course of the twenty-first century that can also be evidenced in online blogs, websites, and magazines. Websites like *Metal Sucks*, *Metal Injection*, *Lambgoat*, and *Heavy Blog is Heavy*, to name only a few, frequently post about metal and hardcore bands, as well as publishing articles on the interaction(s) of those genres.[52] Explicating relationships between metal and punk, Waksman (2009) offers a significant academic perspective on metal and hardcore. His broader focus of metal and punk interaction, primarily during the 1970s and '80s, highlights instances where metal and punk have informed and supported one another. In part, then, the present chapter is the beginning of an attempt to update aspects of his research to include the 1990s and twenty-first century, but also to narrow the focus to the complex relationship between metal and hardcore. Whereas Waksman considers hardcore as an offshoot of punk, I conceptualise hardcore as a standalone genre that nevertheless exhibits elements drawn from punk.

Though '[o]ften considered in oppositional terms, metal and punk have crossed into one another as often as they have been starkly differentiated' (Waksman 2009, p. 7), indeed, '[e]arly metal and early punk were, to no small degree, convergent rather than divergent occurrences' (p. 67). Waksman's conception of a 'metal/punk continuum' neatly encapsulates the nature of the 'particularly charged, at times even intimate sort of relationship that has informed the two genres in terms of sound, image, and discourse' (2009, p. 7), but that connection is nevertheless of a different kind to that between metal and hardcore. While he recognises that 'differences between metal and punk are

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[52] http://www.metalsucks.net/; http://www.metalinjection.net/; http://www.lambgoat.com/; http://www.heavyblogisheavy.com/ (all accessed 5/9/2017).

not the product of essential characteristics that have defined the two genres, but have arisen through the historical process of contesting the value and definition of rock' (Waksman 2009, p. 308), Waksman's continuum retains a notion that metal and punk are clearly distinct. By contrast, the bond between metal and hardcore has become such that one is very difficult to separate from the other (particularly concerning Anglo-American versions of the genres). In other words, the relationship between metal and hardcore is *symbiotic*.

Generic Symbiosis

Metal and hardcore have, for a long time, been connected through a relationship that can be described as symbiotic. By this, I mean that both genres have found sustenance, support, and inspiration in one another. As with any form of symbiosis, it is difficult, if not impossible, to disconnect one organism from the other, though this is rarely reflected in academic discourse on metal or hardcore. The inherent conflict (parasitism) and cooperation (mutualism) of symbiotic relationships (Martin & Schwab 2013) provide an apposite metaphor when discussing the relationship between metal and hardcore.[53] Each organism enters a relationship with the other in order to survive, to sustain itself; however, since one relies on the other, there must be (at least) a modicum of cooperation to achieve individual goals (Douglas 2010). I do not intend to construct genres as having conscious minds; rather, like many organisms that enter into and evolve from symbiotic relationships, genres come to be intertwined almost accidentally, over time, and in stages.

The interactions of metal and hardcore may be characterised as symbiotic insomuch as the development of each genre has, in some way, been contingent upon the other. This interdependence cannot be portrayed simply as metal bands playing hardcore riffs or hardcore fans wearing metal band merchandise.

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[53] On opposing definitions of symbiosis, Bradford D. Martin and Ernest Schwab note that '[a]round 1960-1990, some biologists believed that the common restrictive definition (i.e. symbiosis = mutualism) had replaced de Bary's [1879] original definition (i.e. symbiosis = mutualism, commensalism, and parasitism)' (Martin & Schwab 2013, p. 32). Though I omit explicit mention of commensalism (wherein symbiosis produces a positive effect in one organism and a neutral effect in the other), I am confident such relationships could be observed as part of metal/hardcore's symbiosis. See Martin and Schwab (2013) for a useful diagram outlining a '[s]implified and inclusive scheme of symbiosis' (p. 41).

Rather, this literal, explicit, and overt form of confluence is underpinned by a notional, theoretical, and sometimes covert symbiosis between the two genres that promotes and sustains their very existence as distinct but not separate forms. This symbiosis functions to promote both division *and* unity, to continually redraw the boundaries of each genre resulting in instances of hybridity and purity, and it is this symbiotic relationship that supports the continued development of both genres.

Central to my theory, then, is a conception of genre as more than simple categories into which bands are placed by commentators, or banners under which bands position themselves (Holt 2003). Similarly, the term 'genre' should not be taken to denote purely sonic phenomena, instead referring to a variety of physical and digital artefacts (sonic and visual media, iconography, written discourse; Kahn-Harris 2007), and perceptions (preferences, opinions, likes), which are continually being created, maintained, challenged, and transformed. As Waksman observes, '[a]lthough genres are often popularly understood in terms of their *musical* difference from each other, formal musical elements are but a part of genre's overall significance' (2009, p. 8; original emphasis). These seemingly disparate aspects of genre are brought together by the analysis (academic or otherwise) performed by genre participants that combines sometimes previously discrete elements to form new conceptions of a given (sub)genre and, occasionally, 'new' (sub)genres. It seems clear, therefore, that genres are in a state of perpetual flux. A claim that band *x* is a part of genre *y* is neither fixed nor definite; rather, it is *contingent* upon the often-vague criteria against which such a judgement is made and must be understood as containing properties of value. More so than as fluid (Middleton 2000) or as discourse (Walser 1993), conceptions of genre in flux afford and foreground the ever-changing parameters of genre that are observed over time; indeed, it is the malleability of generic parameters that affords their continued existence by allowing participants to *contest* elements of genre.

According to multiple narratives of hardcore, after the initial wave(s) of punk during the late 1970s, hardcore came to the fore as a new, more aggressive offshoot of punk: '1976-80 were the Punk and New Wave years – Hardcore

happened 1980-86. If Punk peaked in 1977, then Hardcore's glory days were 1981-82' (Blush 2010, p. 15). Much like metal before it, what began as a subgenre eventually expanded to become a genre unto itself, albeit heavily indebted to punk: 'Hardcore is a broad genre but began generally as a faster version of punk. During the 1990s the two scenes became increasingly distinct, with their own styles and fashions' (Haenfler 2006, p. 9). Peterson's (2009) focus on hardcore during the 1990s might undermine Blush's claim, or intimate that hardcore of the 1990s is a genre distinct from that of the 1980s. The disagreement regarding hardcore's temporal existence serves to indicate how generic boundaries surrounding hardcore have changed over time. Of particular interest here is Blush's characterisation of hardcore as having a lifespan of only six years, suggesting that, at the very least, hardcore fell out of favour around 1986 or, more pertinently, that hardcore changed in some way around that date.

Crossover

During the mid-1980s, some hardcore and metal fans began recognising links between their favoured genres, beginning with the perceived outsider status of the music and its followers, but increasingly in other areas as well. The term 'crossover' was coined to describe the multifaceted mixing of hardcore and metal, though the term later became synonymous with hardcore and, perhaps to a lesser extent, thrash metal (DiStefano 2015; Heavy Blog 2016). While there were precedents in the compositional similarities and mutual borrowing between metal and punk since the 1970s (Waksman 2004b, 2009), the depth and breadth of exchange between metal and hardcore took the concept a step further. The melding of compositional, visual, performance-related, discursive, and ideological elements of metal and hardcore during the mid-to-late 1980s were so extensive as to turn crossover into a subgenre of its own (Waksman 2009, p. 239). Rather than hardcore guitarists playing metal riffs or metal vocalists singing hardcore lyrics, the notion of crossover as its own entity allowed for a wide variety of interplay between previously defined metal and hardcore concepts. Along with bands, fans of metal and hardcore mixed, copying one another's attire (worn iconography), concert etiquette and

practices, and attitude (Blush 2010, pp. 220-221). Notions of DIY and independence, initially espoused by punk but reified and central to hardcore, became more common in metal, while a semi-professionalism drawn from metal solidified the commercial viability of hardcore. Bands from each genre began touring with one another and sharing record labels (Hill 2015a).

For Blush and others, crossover signalled a shift away from traditional, pure hardcore, but to those who conceptualised crossover as a subgenre, the combination of metal and hardcore was relatively short-lived and often favoured one side over the other. Waksman asserts that 'crossover came briefly to function as something like a subgenre unto itself, akin to the newly established categories of speed and thrash metal but wearing its punk trappings more on the surface' (2009, p. 239), and Wiederhorn and Turman contend that once 'the foundation for crossover was established, […] bands from around the country began constructing their own blends of metallic hardcore' (2013, p. 267). Clearly, then, there remains some disagreement over which 'side' a crossover band was from, even as those sides were (supposedly) being eroded. As ever, depending upon whom you believe, crossover 'had largely run its course by the end of the 1980s' (Waksman 2009, p. 240) or '[b]y 1992, crossover had hit a critical mass' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 295) and '[b]y 1995, crossover had run its course' (p. 304).

While those particularly loyal to one genre may have dismissed what they saw as the dilution of their preferred music culture, the mixing of metal and hardcore benefited both in various ways. After the first hardcore bands had seemingly exhausted the formula of fast-paced, simplified punk, 'metal rejuvenated the urgency of the hardcore punk scene at a crucial hour' (Christe 2003, p. 179) by offering a new vocabulary for high-tempo playing, exemplified by thrash metal. In turn, when 'metal encountered punk music, fashion, politics, and ethics, a broader sense of identity developed. […] The resulting underground pride influenced the development of metal in the next decade' (p. 180), having a significant impact on later iterations of 'underground' genres like death metal and grindcore (explored further in chapter five).

Metalcore

Related to conceptions of crossover, but gaining currency slightly later during the 1980s, and still a popular genre moniker today, metalcore marks a simultaneous point of departure and confluence.[54] Whereas crossover was perceived as hardcore mixing with metal, or vice versa, metalcore's very foundation is an assemblage of metal and hardcore (and other genres) that does not necessarily pride one over the other. Though fans of hardcore may prefer the 'more hardcore' metalcore bands, any value judgements seem to come from outside metalcore, not from within. 'In the late 1980s the territories [of metal and hardcore] were merging to become one and the same' (Christe 2003, p. 180), to such an extent that it became difficult to discern one from the other. Wiederhorn and Turman (2013) construct a clear lineage between crossover and metalcore, the former given a lifespan ending in 1992, with the latter reportedly beginning that same year. Something of a spiritual successor to crossover, 'it's too simple to describe metalcore as a mere hybrid of metal and hardcore' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 557), since metalcore's primary aesthetic, as has become clear during the twenty-first century, is one of hybridity and acceptance of disparate influences. Crossover enacted a direct influence upon metalcore by removing some of the boundaries between metal and hardcore, undermining the power of the Other while keeping intact elements of composition, performance, production, and iconography (Cowan 2012).

The consciously hybrid nature of metalcore resulted initially in a somewhat amorphous version of the genre. Commentary on metalcore of the 1990s tends to construct the genre as stylistically indistinct, referring to a general mixing of metal and hardcore that variously incorporates elements of hardcore, crossover, thrash metal, groove metal, and death metal. Berelian's wide-ranging conception of metalcore includes artists as dissimilar as Sick of It All, The Dillinger Escape Plan, and Mastodon (2005, p. 223), grouped as such primarily (it would seem) as a result of each artist mixing elements drawn from various metal/hardcore genres. A more stable interpretation of metalcore

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[54] Metalcore forms the basis of the case study presented in chapter six.

emerged during the New Wave of American Heavy Metal period that codified metalcore into a recognisable form (the subject of chapter six) with identifiable style characteristics. A product of metal/hardcore symbiosis, metalcore's overt hybridity is also conspicuous in the related genres of mathcore and deathcore, both of which amalgamate aspects of diverse metal/hardcore genres.

Notional Divide

A notional divide between metal and hardcore has been a source of creativity for numerous musicians, producers, promoters, record label executives, and journalists related to both genres since the early 1980s. Whether or not such a divide exists physically, the perception of a division between metal and hardcore has provided a creative impulse for many. The notion's appeal is a result of tension between those who support a separation between metal and hardcore, and those who seek to combine the genres. In this regard, a crucial aspect of metal and hardcore's symbiotic relationship is the tension inherent in such a relationship; that is, metal and hardcore rely upon one another for continued influence and inspiration, while also fighting for their independence to ensure their individual survival. Constructions of a divide between metal and hardcore can therefore be understood in two ways: a divide to be overcome, and a divide to be maintained.

Constructed to be Overcome

The subgenres of crossover and, later, full-fledged genre of metalcore were based upon surmounting a supposed divide between the genres of metal and hardcore. Despite the prior mixing of early heavy metal and punk, some metal and hardcore bands (and fans) during the 1980s perceived something of a separation between their musical cultures (Rettman 2014, pp. 241-245). From this perspective, those participants who attempted to mix metal and hardcore knowingly put themselves at risk of being chastised by their community. However, the narrative of opposition is constructed precisely in order to portray those participants as struggling against prevalent, possibly sacrosanct generic norms. Founding member of New York crossover band Carnivore, and later founder and vocalist of Type O Negative, the late Peter Steele contends that

'[t]here was almost no crossover [between genres]. […] We had trouble, because metal kids saw Carnivore as outdated and image-heavy, and the hardcore kids didn't accept us because we had long hair' (in Christe 2003, p. 179). In spite of this apparent resistance, Steele and his bandmates valiantly continued their mission to fuse aspects of metal and hardcore. Carnivore's inspiration to play crossover music, then, was predicated on a perception of some metal/hardcore divide that needed to be overcome. Vocalist of hardcore band Integrity, Dwid Hellion employs similar rhetoric, claiming that '[t]he punks hated us, the metal kids hated us, and the hardcore community hated us. I love that' (in Peterson 2009, p. 292). Despite Integrity releasing their debut album, *Those Who Fear Tomorrow* (1991), six years after Carnivore's first release (*Carnivore*, 1985), it seems that a division between metal and hardcore was still extant and, more pertinently, that Hellion drew satisfaction from antagonising those supporting the divide.

If one conceptualises metalcore, a deliberate amalgam of metal and hardcore, as the spiritual successor to crossover, a conscious attempt to 'cross' metal and hardcore boundaries, then surely the work of bands like Carnivore and S.O.D. (Stormtroopers of Death) successfully altered the parameters of genre relationships. Previously, a band was either metal or hardcore, but from the early nineties onwards, a band could be both. While it is accurate to assert that crossover changed the boundaries of metal and hardcore – each genre taking aspects from the other to call its own – the notional divide remained evident. Every Time I Die vocalist Keith Buckley suggests that '[t]he whole metalcore thing started [in the late eighties and early nineties] with bands like Earth Crisis, Deadguy, Converge, Coalesce, and Cave In' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 557; square brackets in original), but Haenfler disagrees, contending that 'Victory Records artists Strife (CA), Earth Crisis (NY), and Snapcase (NY) paved the way for a more metal-influenced hardcore in the 1990s' (2006, p. 16).[55] The construction of Earth Crisis as metalcore on the one hand and hardcore on the other highlights the fluidity of genre boundaries, but Haenfler

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[55] Earth Crisis's inclusion in both lists is indicative of metalcore's convoluted origin narrative (explored further in chapter six).

is nevertheless clearly of the opinion that Earth Crisis are a hardcore band, *not* a metal band.

Shadows Fall vocalist, Brian Fair, and Killswitch Engage bassist, Mike D'Antonio, employ similar rhetoric when discussing the metal/hardcore scene in Boston, MA during the early 1990s (Killswitch Engage 2005). Reflecting on their time in Boston metalcore band Overcast, Fair and D'Antonio recollect the struggles of being accepted by audiences when combining elements of metal and hardcore – '[t]here was a mentality of "keep your metal out of my hardcore", and it was like "keep your chocolate out of my peanut butter"' (Fair in Killswitch Engage 2005, 3:09-3:13) – but suggest a productive element to this tension: '[t]hat was sorta how we got our sound, just kinda pushing the envelope' (D'Antonio, 3:14-3:17). Again, the supposed tension between metal and hardcore is used as a key point within a narrative of initial resistance being overcome by determination and skill. The geographical location of Overcast is also a significant factor in this discussion: hailing from Boston, MA, they may not have been exposed to the developing metalcore sound in New York City (home to both Carnivore and S.O.D.), though this does not account for God Forbid (based in East Brunswick, NJ) guitarist Doc Coyle suggesting that 'Overcast were, like, kinda considered to be the original metalcore band' (in Killswitch Engage 2005, 3:24-3:28).

Hardcore had integrated with metal first during the 1980s (Waksman 2009), but the network of distinct yet connected hardcore scenes (Haenfler 2006) that afforded these differing perspectives on metal and hardcore continued throughout the following decade. While the notion of metalcore may have been codified primarily on the US east coast,[56] by the end of the 1990s, bands on the west coast were finding new resistance to their continued hybridisation. Formed in Orange County, California in 1998, Atreyu 'fought relentlessly to win over metalcore fans with vocals that were alternately acerbic and syrupy, and guitars that combined elements of thrash, post-hardcore, and eighties metal'

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[56] See chapter six for my explication of metalcore codified through the New Wave of American Heavy Metal.

(Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 594). Just as earlier metalcore bands had found difficulty convincing fans of metal or hardcore that they could be fans of both, Atreyu encountered trouble when combining the 'wrong' types of metal and hardcore.[57] Whereas crossover had stuck quite rigidly to merging thrash metal and hardcore punk, the ostensible metalcore ethos had been to unite metal and hardcore, but, it would seem, only certain strains of metal and hardcore were acceptable. Here, then, the metal/hardcore divide returns *from within*.

Hardcore bands have 'kept the idea of hardcore evolving by incrementally adding elements to the music including many that added a slightly more metallic edge to their sound' (Peterson 2009, p. 14), while metal has 'kept itself vital by accepting new influences' (Christe 2003 p. 335), but that acceptance is rarely all encompassing. Rather, there is a cycle of initial resistance, followed by integration and, later, acceptance, finally developing into a recognisable form into which some may attempt to bring new influence(s).[58] Whereas there is an 'envisioning of jazz as an organic entity that periodically revitalizes itself through the upheaval of stylistic change while retaining its essential identity' (DeVeaux 1991, p. 540), some metal/hardcore participants argue that 'with all breakthroughs of genius or imagination in history, deterioration follows. Through advertising and institutionalized example, the new generation has been trained to consume and regurgitate this "morphed" and "safer" version ad infinitum' (Time in Malta vocalist/bassist Todd Gullion in Peterson 2009, p. 20).

Characterising the burgeoning metalcore genre during the early twenty-first century as in opposition to more commercially viable metal genres like nu metal and hardcore punk genres like pop punk, Christe notes that '[t]his is a mirror reflection of when heavy metal first turned to hardcore influences in the mid-

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[57] By incorporating stylistic elements of glam metal, Atreyu displayed their admiration for an 'abject genre' (Smialek 2015, p. 293). Smialek's abject genres are discussed in relation to metalcore in chapter six.

[58] This process is broadly similar to the 'forms of incorporation' identified by Hebdige (1979, pp. 92-99) wherein spectacular subcultures eventually become incorporated into the hegemonic culture against which they were initially resistant.

1980s' (2003, p. 373), reinforcing the notion that when parts of metal become too popular, some participants turn to 'the underground' for inspiration.[59]

Constructed to be Maintained

Despite the best efforts of some crossover and metalcore bands (and related genres like grindcore), the narrative of differentiation and tension between metal and hardcore remains prevalent. While those in metalcore continue this narrative in order to claim subcultural capital (Thornton 1995), positioning themselves as fighting to bridge the metal/hardcore divide, some bands in hardcore and in metal seek to reinforce the divide, promoting themselves as fighting *against* a melding of the genres. This ideology is arguably most overt within hardcore bands, especially those emerging after crossover and metalcore. The resistance to non-hardcore styles is evidenced in everything from composition (excluding overly virtuosic solos, utilising hardcore roars instead of growls or screams), to performance practices (stage-diving rather than walls of death, smaller venues), and merchandise design (simple logos sometimes accompanied by a lyric excerpt).

The significance of hardcore lyrics and the message that they are commonly understood to communicate is also critical to those seeking to maintain a division between metal and hardcore (or between hardcore and everything else) (Peterson 2009).[60] Unlike metal vocalists who may utilise a range of clean and distorted vocal styles – singing, screaming, growling, roaring, etc. – hardcore vocalists frequently employ a vocal style closer to a shout or yell, sometimes intercut with exasperated speech (spoken word). Nominally, this different approach to vocalisation is based on the premise that hardcore lyrics must be easily understood by the audience in order to most efficiently communicate the message, but this style has also found a home in metalcore. Unlike older, more traditional versions of metal that used fantastical imagery

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[59] Tensions between notions of underground and mainstream, as well as between tradition and progression, are explicated in chapter five.

[60] Though interviews with hardcore bands comprise the bulk of his book, Peterson (2009) devotes the first four chapters to discussion of prominent themes in hardcore lyrics: political and social awareness (pp. 25-55), straight edge (pp. 56-82), animal rights (pp. 83-107), and spirituality (pp. 109-135).

and allegory, hardcore lyrics have long been concerned with the everyday, mundane lives of its participants. In isolation, these unwritten hardcore rules may have become constraining rather than useable guidelines for creativity, but set in a narrative of constant (mis)appropriation by metal bands and fans, these hardcore principles are perceived as something worth defending. Crossover bands in the mid-to-late 1980s made use of the direct imagery and articulation of hardcore lyrics and vocals, and by the turn of the twenty-first century, metalcore bands were fusing hardcore vocals with metal-inspired lyrics and/or metal lyrics vocalised with a hardcore shout (Hill 2015a).

In this respect, participants of crossover and, perhaps to a greater extent, metalcore are perceived to be 'diluting' hardcore values and appropriating them for their own (seemingly nefarious) ends. Against such a backdrop it is unsurprising to see hardcore band Madball make frequent explicit reference to hardcore in their lyrics, song and album titles: 'Hardcore Still Lives!' (*Demonstrating My Style*, 1996), *N.Y.H.C. EP* (2004), and *Hardcore Lives* (2014). Since their inception, Madball have been compelled to reiterate their allegiance to hardcore, their status as a hardcore band, and, significantly, the continued existence of the hardcore genre. While one could interpret Madball's mentions of hardcore as self-aggrandising, it is equally valid to suggest that the band are doing so in order to reinforce a notion of hardcore as autonomous, as distinct from metal. In a less overt manner, Terror's *Keepers of the Faith* (2010) positions the band as defending the validity of hardcore while also serving as a rallying cry for their fans – not coincidently, merchandise bearing those words is very popular amongst the band's fans. Like Madball, Terror seem to take a pro-active approach to promoting hardcore as its own genre, separate from metal. Indeed, Terror vocalist Scott Vogel asserts that one of the primary reasons he left former band Buried Alive was that, in his opinion, the other members of the band 'started caring less about hardcore [and] told me not to talk about hardcore on stage' (Century Media 2012, 18:16-18:23). That these declarations of division have sustained for so long indicates that for those who

feel 'proper' hardcore is being encroached by metal, the struggle is ongoing.[61] Rather than mere paranoia, this notion is congruent with an understanding of (sub)genres as continually in flux, their boundaries being tested, permeated, and redrawn over time.

Symbiosis in the 21st Century

Even as hardcore bands restate the metal/hardcore divide in the twenty-first century, metal and hardcore continue to influence one another both implicitly and explicitly. Hardcore in the twenty-first century is a far more professional affair than that of the 1980s; production values, touring schedules, management, and even technical musicianship are all of a higher quality in the new millennium. Festivals like Hellfest (US) and the New England Metal and Hardcore Festival, as well as festival-tours like Sounds of the Underground,[62] were founded on the basis of mixing metal and hardcore bands.[63] While these developments may have given hardcore access to a larger audience, some hardcore participants also see these as evidence of hardcore 'weakening' its tough, oppositional posture. Twenty-first century hardcore band Hellmouth's creative impetus 'comes from a disdain with the contrived notions of the music community […] the group espouses a mentality of resistance and destruction to the contrived norm' (Abbey 2014, p. 169), clearly positioning themselves against the mixing of metal and hardcore, supporting the notion of hardcore as autonomous.

A similar attitude can be found in resistance to more recent hybrid (sub)genre trends. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the term 'deathcore' came to be used for a number of bands that were mixing elements of death metal with metalcore and hardcore. Although death metal had always been an influence on metalcore, especially European melodic death metal (Wiederhorn

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[61] A subtext of ongoing struggle for real hardcore might be inferred from the name of the annual This is Hardcore festival (http://www.thisishardcorefest.com/, accessed 5/9/2017).

[62] Filmmaker Doug Spangenberg has directed DVD releases for each of these festivals (see Spangenberg 2001, 2004, 2006).

[63] New England Metal and Hardcore Festival co-founder/organiser, Scott Lee, confirms that he had been 'combining shows of metal and hardcore previously and this combination is how [the festival] got started' (in Ringo 2014).

& Turman 2013), deathcore artists frequently employed blast-beats, tremolo-picking riffs, growling, and death metal-inspired imagery. Bands like Whitechapel, Suicide Silence, and Job for a Cowboy gained an international following under the banner of deathcore, but almost as soon as their popularity peaked voices from within death metal were accusing deathcore bands of stylistic misappropriation. Of course, deathcore did little to diminish the popularity of death metal – it may well have done the opposite – but the perception remained that death metal, like hardcore, revelled in its exclusivity, in its oppositional, underground status. For death metal and hardcore, brushes with 'mainstream' popularity threatened the sanctity of the genres and, therefore, had to be combatted by reaffirming and restating the 'core' elements of their genres.

Conclusion

Supported by the drive to claim subcultural capital, metal/hardcore participants seek information on the histories of various genres and subgenres in order to better challenge the conclusions of others. In so doing, the division between 'regular' participants and those that provide commentary and analysis in the form of scholarly or journalistic writing begins to narrow as both sets of people become actively involved in structuring and restructuring the history of the music culture. Issues of consequentiality affect those models of metal/hardcore history that seek to present the music/culture in a linear, chronological fashion with clear divisions between various genres. Opposing narratives of progression and regression emerge from consequential frameworks that further limit the interaction of metal/hardcore genres. Indeed, much of this historiography separates metal and hardcore in an attempt to maintain an internal lineage. By contrast, generic symbiosis between metal and hardcore not only accounts for their shared development, but recognises the creative potential of broadly conflicting interpretations of genre history and of the genre itself.

Metal/hardcore symbiosis is marked by instances of conflict and cooperation, spurring creative efforts from each side and ensuring continued vitality. The

notional metal/hardcore divide serves as a creative apparatus for those who oppose it *and* those who support it. Crossover and metalcore bands recognise the potential for metal and hardcore to join forces, to make explicit links that have existed since the earliest days of both genres, to remove what in their mind is an imaginary barrier between one genre and another that seem to share so much. For those that count as primary the purity of either hardcore or metal, the divide between them is to be reinforced. These participants place significance upon differences between the genres, strongly reaffirming them in the face of what they perceive as homogenisation. A principal focus of this thesis is the notion that (musical) genres can be and are used *actively* and *creatively* by participants to shape their experience(s) of culture. To this end, genre is actively engaged in the construction of meaning for metal/hardcore participants and should be considered more thoroughly and positioned more centrally in reflexive studies of metal and hardcore.

Chapter Three – Intra- and Intergeneric Relationships

This chapter focuses on the interrelated nature of metal/hardcore genres by exploring the dynamic relationship between small-scale phenomena (a specific compositional device, say) and large-scale conceptions of genre within metal/hardcore. Following frameworks utilised by Adam Krims (2000) and Williams (2009), I outline techniques of vocal, guitar, and drum performance, along with compositional devices that are both specific to and prevalent in contemporary metal/hardcore. The ubiquity of distorted vocals, for instance, has led to the development of different types – scream, roar, and growl – that are commonly associated with specific genres. Indeed, throughout this chapter I identify (and provide examples of) how versions of a given device might be regularly interpreted in relation to a given genre. Djent serves as a demonstrable instance of specific small-scale details becoming affiliated with a large-scale genre construct.

Having observed connections between small- and large-scale phenomena, I proffer an overview of associations between different metal/hardcore genres, utilising much of the terminology from the chapter's first half. Grouped under four umbrella terms (Heavy Metal, Punk and Hardcore, Extreme Metal, Hybrid Genres) to represent supposedly shared traits and narratives, metal/hardcore genres should nevertheless be conceptualised as interrelated. Drawn from extant discourse, the typology illustrates how distinctions between numerous metal/hardcore genres are frequently fluid and/or faint. Developing the perspective of generic flux, I finish the chapter explaining the effect of subgenre qualifiers that function to variously describe or prescribe combinations of style or deliberate style focuses.

On the Relationship Between Small- and Large-Scale Phenomena

> [M]etal's Third Wave has produced a huge number of new bands, mainly composed of young musicians, constructing signature sounds coming from all parts of metal's past – new doom bands, new thrash bands, new death metal bands, new black metal bands. Other new bands use those older genres as a painter mixes colors – rather than all blue, or in this case all black, colorings from one or more subgenres are modified with tones from others, to form bands' hybrid signature sounds. This is not new – thrash, metalcore, etc. formed whole new subgenres this way (Weinstein 2015, p. 19).

Following the discussions of historiography in the preceding chapter, the extent of classification in metal and hardcore should be evident. Put simply, metal/hardcore participants seemingly exert significant effort in determining the position of a particular artist, album, or geo-temporal scene within a network of interconnected genres. While the disagreement between listeners as demonstrated in the comments section of countless music videos on YouTube might suggest that genre categorisation is a largely arbitrary and inexact process, metal/hardcore discourse from critics, fans, and academics often displays a high level of what we might describe as technical competence: the ability to identify and distinguish between various aspects of instrumentation, performance technique, or compositional device. Moreover, the specific composition of these small-scale elements is commonly taken to comprise different genres or subgenres, such that one might describe 'the typical deathcore sound: tremolo-picked riffing, chugs that sound like a roid-raging freight train, and, of course, the omnipresent and driving force that is the deathcore breakdown' (Handmaker 2015a). That a genre may be described in those technical terms as well as more broadly as the 'bastard scion of hardcore, metalcore, and death metal' (R. Williams 2016) intimates a dynamic relationship between the specific and the general, between a breakdown as compositional device and its particular relationship to deathcore. Indeed, while a song utilising 'tremolo-picked riffing' and 'chugs' may denote deathcore, an artist or album referred to as deathcore connotes the use of those same techniques.

Discussing elevating modulation,[64] Dai Griffiths identifies 'three types of attribution: technical summary; metaphor, where the modulation is compared to something in the life world; and association, where the modulation is linked to an artist or genre noted for their use of the device' (2015, p. 26). These 'three types of attribution' may be recognised in metal/hardcore discourse referring to both small-scale and large-scale phenomena. Tremolo-picking offers a technical summary of the technique employed, while referring to vocals as variously clean or distorted draws deliberate comparisons to guitar tones ('something in the life world'), and Phillipov's identification of the 'Suffocation blast' (2012, p. 86) explicitly links the technique to a particular artist. We might consider a genre title like metalcore as a 'technical summary' insomuch as it neatly encapsulates a combination of metal and hardcore, while a subgenre like melodic death metal makes explicit the focus or, perhaps, limitation of the music. Metaphoric terminology is reserved for more esoteric subgenres like crust punk, sludge, or doom metal. Attribution by association may best describe the practice of referring to a subgenre through the addition of a prefix to an existing genre term, as in technical death metal, post-black metal, or progressive deathcore.

Performance Techniques and Compositional Devices

The extent of the relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena is particularly apparent when one examines performance techniques and compositional devices common to metal/hardcore. Although many of these small-scale attributes are shared among multiple metal/hardcore genres, many participants nevertheless associate particular devices with particular genres on a daily basis. This section outlines some of the most prominent performance techniques and compositional devices utilised within metal/hardcore, highlighting those instances where a given technique has become widely associated with a given genre or, in some instances, a single artist. While many of the following techniques and devices are not unique to metal/hardcore (power chords are ubiquitous in most if not all rock genres, for instance), the

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[64] 'The modulation can informally be defined by three aspects – it is found usually towards the end of a track, is usually upwards in direction, and it usually upwards by a semitone or tone' (Griffiths 2015, p. 22).

usages here outlined are particular to metal/hardcore. Moreover, regardless of their presence in other genres, metal/hardcore participants largely conceptualise these techniques and devices as operating within what we might call a metal/hardcore genre system.[65] In other words, the use of double-kick drumming in metalcore is usually received in relation to the technique as used in death metal, rather than double-kick drumming used in jazz.[66] Examples given in this section should be taken as broadly representative of certain techniques and devices, but it would of course be impossible to present an exhaustive list of every technique utilised in metal/hardcore music, not to mention their innumerable variations. Instead, I have deliberately chosen to explore techniques and devices that are both prominent in multiple metal/hardcore genres and, significantly, are routinely considered by participants as connected with specific genres, thereby showcasing the relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena.

Vocals

Vocals serve as one of the clearest signifiers of metal/hardcore as much as the ubiquitous distorted guitars.[67] Indeed, some terms frequently used to demarcate two broad vocal types are drawn from vocabulary used to describe guitar tones: clean and distorted. This linguistic appropriation results from ongoing usage by participants of various types, not to mention its presence in metal studies (this thesis included). Although some scholars advise against utilising the concept of distortion in this way (see below), a basic distinction can be made between clean vocals as those found most often in Western popular music and distorted vocals as those utilised almost entirely within metal/hardcore music. Indeed, while different scholars employ distinct terminology (with varying levels of specificity), the element central to each of these terms (and the use thereof) is the ascription of otherness to metal/hardcore vocals when compared to those of other popular music(s). This

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[65] Drawn from Krims's notion of a genre system for rap (2000, p. 46).

[66] An early proponent of double-kick drumming (Nyman 2013), Louis Bellson can be heard playing with two kick drums on Louis Bellson and His Orchestra's *Skin Deep* (1955).

[67] '[T]he voice is one of the defining features of death metal—even for those otherwise unfamiliar with the genre' (Phillipov 2012, p. 74).

is most explicit in discussion of distorted vocals, but also emerges when considering what I describe as clean vocals.

Tracing metal/hardcore vocal styles to blues rock, early metal studies texts emphasise the notion of power in the heavy metal voice demonstrated most overtly when vocalists 'scream' (Walser 1993, p. 9; Weinstein 2000, p. 26) words or short phrases, but nonetheless also present in the rest of their vocals. Although rock bands of the late 1960s utilised 'a more aggressive vocal style than before' (Lilja 2009, p. 31) and the Beatles' 'Helter Skelter' (*The Beatles*, 1968) employed 'vocals that are delivered in what is almost a shouting style' (p. 32), one of the first vocal trends to become associated with metal specifically was so-called operatic style exemplified by vocalists like Rob Halford (Judas Priest), Bruce Dickinson (Iron Maiden), and Ronnie James Dio (Rainbow, Black Sabbath, Dio).[68] Despite this perception, however, '[o]peratic voices belong to the classical music tradition and, aside from rare exceptions (e.g. former Nightwish vocalist Tarja Turunen), are basically left out of HM [Heavy Metal] canons' (Mesiä & Ribaldini 2015, p. 386).

Power, control, and emotionality (Weinstein 2000, pp. 25-27) are often presented as defining characteristics of clean metal vocals, differentiating them from the apparent banality of those found in mainstream pop. Vince Neilstein acknowledges implicit othering in the designation 'clean singing — or as the rest of the world calls it, singing' (2016a), emphasising the perceived need for qualification when encountering pop vocals in metal/hardcore.[69] Some generic vocabulary exhibits further dissociation: '[f]rontmen and women in the death metal scene are described not as "singers" but as *vocalists*, since their voices exhibit little of the melody or tunefulness that signifies "singing" as it is conventionally understood' (Phillipov 2012, p. 75; original emphasis). By describing distorted vocals as 'growls, grunts, barks, and roars' (Phillipov 2012, p. 79) or 'rabid vocalising' produced by 'sneering, bawling, screaming, shouting,

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[68] See, for example: Judas Priest, *Sad Wings of Destiny* (1976); Iron Maiden, *The Number of the Beast* (1982); Dio, *Holy Diver* (1983).

[69] Neilstein goes on to compare clean vocals to 'all sorts of un-metal things a band can do that get a pass — acoustic guitars, keyboards, bongos, fucking didgeridoos' (2016a), thus conceptualising the clean vocal style as *not* metal.

growling, or roaring' (Cope 2010, p. 98), metal/hardcore participants position their preferred genre as detached from (perhaps even in opposition to) other popular music.

However, in coining their own descriptive vocabulary, metal/hardcore participants and scholars have typically neglected discussing the production of metal vocals. Susanna Mesiä and Paolo Ribaldini (2015) offer one of the few academic studies devoted to the analysis of metal/hardcore vocals, suggesting a 'recommended terminology' (p. 390) that describes 'vocals from the points of view of both production and perception' (p. 391).[70] Their proposed vocabulary for vocals comprises four registers (low to high: vocal fry, speech/chest, head/falsetto, whistle), three related vocal effects (distortion, twang, vibrato), and three other vocal phenomena (position of the larynx, belting, classical singing) (2015, p. 390).[71] They posit a primary difference between metal's 'three main sub-genres […] *traditional*, *pop*, and *extreme* metal' being that 'extreme metal employs different vocal tools, of which the main one is grunting' (2015, p. 383; original emphasis). For present purposes, the most significant aspect of Mesiä and Ribaldini's study is a 'clear difference between *distortion* and *grunt*: although they both produce very aggressive timbres, the former is an effect and still leaves audible the fundamental pitch of the tone, whereas the latter may be considered as separate from registers, and doesn't have a fundamental pitch' (2015, p. 391; original emphases). While acknowledging the specificity provided by such a distinction, my use of 'distorted vocals' nevertheless covers both distortion and grunt in Mesiä and Ribaldini's vocabulary.

My use of 'distorted vocals' results from (1) a reflection of extant discourse, (2) its relationship to guitar terminology, and (3) the ability to account for a range of distorted vocal types. As with other elements of genre constructs, the relative

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[70] See also Marcus Erbe (2014) for another academic analysis of distorted vocal production in metal.

[71] 'Vocal *registers* happen at the level of vocal folds. *Effects* are caused by the intervention of other parts in the vocal tract. *Other vocal phenomena* belong to neither of the two previous groups, and are characterized by their own specific configurations of the vocal fold and vocal tract levels or activity of the external muscles of the larynx' (Mesiä & Ribaldini 2015, p. 391; original emphases).

imprecision of expressions like 'distorted vocals' affords participants significant flexibility when employing the term. Metallica's James Hetfield (Pillsbury 2006, p. 106), Motörhead's Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister (Cope 2010, p. 98), and Dio's Dio (Mesiä & Ribaldini 2015, p. 389) have all been described as utilising distorted vocals, but the sounds of their voices differ considerably. Distorted vocals appear in genres as diverse as hardcore (Pillsbury 2006, p. 5) and extreme metal (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 32), including death metal (Phillipov 2012, p. 79). Though there are alternatives,[72] the clean/distorted dichotomy foregrounds the perceptual connection between vocals and guitar in metal/hardcore music. Kahn-Harris (2007, p. 32), Cope (2010, p. 132), and Neilstein (2012b) all suggest that a significant function of distorted vocals in metal/hardcore is to contribute to the focused texture of the ensemble, rather than act as the centre of attention that is accompanied by the ensemble as might be interpreted in other popular music. Smialek's spectrographic analysis of distorted vocals in 'The Vowel Song' by Zimmers Hole (*When You Were Shouting at the Devil… We Were in League with Satan*, 2008) illustrates that 'the voice's first formant parallels the exact contour of the guitar part' (2015, p. 280). In this instance, 'it does not seem far-fetched for a listener to perceptually connect the guitar melody and the formant movements, thereby imagining a kind of melodic motion assigned to a series of unpitched screams' (p. 280).

Clarity of lyrics and pitch are common issues in discourse on distorted vocals. Kahn-Harris contends that vocals in extreme metal (primarily death metal and black metal) 'are screamed or growled in ways that generally make lyrics impossible to decipher without the aid of a lyric sheet' (2007, p. 32), a view echoed by Lilja (2009, p. 45) and Phillipov (2012, p. 76). Countering previous ideas that distorted vocals 'serve a primarily percussive role because they are unpitched', Smialek proposes that these vocal styles 'may be better

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[72] Andrew L. Cope coins '[r]abid vocalising […] to describe a vocal style that moves away from traditional singing to one that is more akin to angry shouting' (2010, p. 98), while some participants distinguish between vocals that are clean and harsh (Hatch 2017), or clean and unclean (see, for instance, this discussion of vocal terminology on Reddit: https://www.reddit.com/r/Metalcore/comments/2n9t7i/why_do_we_call_them_clean_and_uncl ean_vocals/, accessed 5/9/2017).

characterized as complex-pitched' (2015, p. 260). Rather than produce a definite pitch within the Western standard of twelve-tone equal temperament, distorted vocals might be understood to share pitch qualities with drum cymbals: '[o]ne can clearly hear a difference between high and low cymbals even if it would be impossible to reproduce that difference at a pitched instrument like a piano' (Smialek 2015, p. 260). While vocal tutor Melissa Cross contends that certain distorted vocal techniques afford the production of musical pitch (2007), issues of definite pitch are relatively unimportant to the present study. Rather, that participants may distinguish between various types of distorted vocals, whether produced using different techniques or simply generating distinctive timbres, is central to the relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena. More specifically, participants commonly perceive certain forms of distorted vocals as associated with certain genres (and vice versa): 'distinctions between death metal growls, black metal screeches, gutturals, brees, and so on and so forth are not lost on me' (Neilstein 2012b).

Distorted vocals may be divided into three main categories that largely correspond to their usage in and association with certain genres. Reflecting terminology in metal/hardcore participant discourse, I distinguish between growls, screams, and roars. Unlike Cross's three 'kinds of scream' (2007),[73] my division of distorted vocals concentrates on the perception of these vocals by listeners, rather than differing techniques for their production.[74] Information on different techniques for achieving distorted vocal timbres has become more widespread during the twenty-first century, with a growing body of people offering advice (Vokillcovers 2012) and demonstrations online, including metal vocalists like Whitechapel's Phil Bozeman (phillybo1985 2013). Professional vocal coaches like Melissa Cross have also gained recognition for specialising in distorted vocals (Fury 2006).[75]

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[73] In the order presented, Cross's kinds of scream are 'fry', 'false cord', and 'death' (Cross 2007).

[74] It is for this same reason that I do not utilise Smialek's otherwise intriguing inhale/exhale distinction (2015, p. 242).

[75] Cross has released two DVDs on distorted vocal technique that feature prominent metal/hardcore vocalists (Cross 2005, 2007).

Boundaries between, for instance, growls and roars are malleable and can often be indistinct. Like many other elements of genre, this lack of fixity may be used creatively by musicians who wish to distinguish themselves from other artists (by having particularly low growls, say). Indeed, distinctions between clean and distorted vocals may be similarly flexible, allowing some vocalists to straddle the divide. Continuing the guitar tone analogy, one might describe vocal styles drawn from punk as overdriven – not quite clean, but not properly distorted. In this vein, Lemmy (Motörhead) and Conrad 'Cronos' Lant (Venom) are credited with initiating Cope's 'rabid' vocal style (2010, p. 26) for their 'pained monotone, punk-influenced vocals' (p. 132).[76] These 'aggressive vocal styles became increasingly dominant in the metal scene' (Phillipov 2012, p. 75) during the mid-1980s and feature in many of the thrash metal bands of the decade. James Hetfield (Metallica), Dave Mustaine (Megadeth), and Tom Araya (Slayer) all utilised 'gruff roars and strident shouts' (Phillipov 2012, p. 75) on their band's early releases.[77]

Given its relationship to punk rock (see below), early hardcore vocals were unsurprisingly similar to those found in late-1970s American punk bands like Germs and X. Slightly later, however, vocalists like Henry Rollins (Black Flag), Roger Miret (Agnostic Front), and John Joseph (Cro-Mags) popularised a vocal delivery that moved sardonic punk singing to a more pointed, overdriven shout.[78] The significance of lyrical message and fraternal camaraderie in the genre (Peterson 2009) may be found in another vocal style that connotes hardcore, despite its appearance in other genres during the twenty-first century. Gang or group vocals are often used to emphasise (fragments of) specific lyrics that would otherwise be roared,[79] and are generally recorded by overdubbing takes of multiple people shouting lyrics arranged around a microphone to emulate a larger gang (CreativeLive 2014). Canadian hardcore band

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[76] Motörhead, *Overkill* (1979); Venom, *Welcome to Hell* (1981).

[77] Metallica, *Kill 'Em All* (1983); Megadeth, *Killing Is My Business… and Business is Good!* (1985); Slayer, *Reign in Blood* (1986).

[78] Black Flag, *Damaged* (1981); Agnostic Front, *Victim in Pain* (1984); Cro-Mags, *Age of Quarrel* (1986).

[79] As heard during the breakdown of Terror's 'One Step Behind' (*Always the Hard Way*, 2006), 1:26-1:32.

Comeback Kid employ gang vocals in the first chorus of 'Wake the Dead' (*Wake the Dead*, 2005) to punctuate the refrain 'Wake up the dead!' (1:15-1:17), but the second (and final) double-chorus utilises gang vocals throughout (2:28-3:03). Gang vocals can also signify hardcore when used in other genres, as with the gang chant of 'Forget the man you were' (2:14-2:41) during the two-step riff of Despised Icon's 'In the Arms of Perdition' (*The Ills of Modern Man*, 2007).[80]

With its connotations of animalistic and/or primitive vocalisation, growling is overt in communicating that it is *not* singing. Most commonly associated with death metal,[81] growling vocals have come to be used in a variety of genres with varying levels of connection to 'extreme metal' (see below). The typical growl is a low, 'guttural' (Phillipov 2012, p. 74) sound that eschews equal tempered pitch in favour of a distorted timbre that is perhaps most akin to down-tuned distorted guitars. Cope (2010, p. 26) and Phillipov (2012, p. 76) both trace the development of growling vocals to earlier iterations of overdriven or semi-distorted vocals, suggesting that a 'trajectory of increasingly abrasive vocal styles is taken to its ultimate conclusion in death metal' (p. 75). Some authors cite Possessed's *Seven Churches* (1985) as 'the first proper LP to feature what would become the standard growling death metal vocals for the genre' (Mudrian 2004, p. 69), but since this release still includes vocals that are 'primarily shouted or barked' (Phillipov 2012, p. 75) others proffer Death's *Scream Bloody Gore* (1987) as one of the first to include proper death metal growls. Though utilised in the late-1980s by British grindcore and death metal bands like Napalm Death (Phillipov 2012, p. 76) and Bolt Thrower (Cope 2010, p. 133),[82] growling 'was a style popularized largely by Cannibal Corpse and its frontman Chris Barnes' (Phillipov 2012, p. 76). With the release of albums by Obituary

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[80] Drawn from hardcore and named after the accompanying audience dance, two-step riffs function in a similar manner to breakdowns, generally comprising palm-muted power chords played in a constant quaver pattern, but emphasising beats two and four.

[81] See Kahn-Harris (2007, p. 32), Cope (2010, p. 129), Phillipov (2012, p. 79), and Smialek (2015, p. 120).

[82] Napalm Death, *Scum* (1987); Bolt Thrower, *In Battle There is No Law!* (1988).

and Cannibal Corpse,[83] 'death vocals had evolved into the "Cookie Monster" style that has become the hallmark of the genre' (p. 76).[84]

Thanks in part to the influence of melodic death metal on metalcore in the late 1990s, growls became prominent in much metalcore during the early twenty-first century, although they are most often used in conjunction with other vocal types (both distorted and clean). Growls have become one of the defining features of deathcore, but here they are commonly paired with high screams. Deathcore vocalists like Phil Bozeman (Whitechapel), Elliot Desgagnés (Beneath the Massacre), and Adam Warren (Oceano) employ particularly low growls.[85]

At the other end of the pitch spectrum, screaming refers to high-pitched, often strained-sounding distorted vocals that have connotations with some grindcore (Pig Destroyer, The Locust)[86] as well as black metal (Cradle of Filth, Enthroned, Abigail Williams).[87] Like growling, screams are often so distorted as to be supposedly indecipherable to unenculturated listeners, but screams tend to be used less percussively and are often held for longer durations than growls. Some prominent deathcore vocalists juxtapose low growls with high screams, emphasising the difference between the techniques. Anthony Gunnells (ex-Through The Eyes of The Dead), Hernan 'Eddie' Hermida (ex-All Shall Perish, Suicide Silence), and the late Mitch Lucker (Suicide Silence) are all renowned for their high screams,[88] while Nick Arthur of Molotov Solution makes heavy use of vocal overdubbing on *The Harbinger* (2009), layering his high screams over his low growls in strategic places for emphasis.[89] Death metal bands like

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[83] Obituary, *Slowly We Rot* (1989); Cannibal Corpse, *Eaten Back to Life* (1990).

[84] Referring to growls as 'Cookie Monster vocals' is usually understood as derogatory (Carlos 2014; Hartmann 2016).

[85] Whitechapel, *This Is Exile* (2008); Beneath the Massacre, *Dystopia* (2008); Oceano, *Depths* (2008).

[86] Pig Destroyer, *Prowler in the Yard* (2001); The Locust, *Plague Soundscapes* (2003).

[87] Cradle of Filth, *Dusk and Her Embrace* (1996); Enthroned, *Towards the Skullthrone of Satan* (1997); Abigail Williams, *In the Shadow of a Thousand Suns* (2008).

[88] Through the Eyes of The Dead, *Bloodlust* (2005); All Shall Perish, *The Price of Existence* (2006); Suicide Silence, *The Cleansing* (2007).

[89] As heard on 'Warlords' (*The Harbinger*, 2009) when Arthur growls 'We have it within ourselves to stop this dissolution' before layering growling and screaming to finish the phrase 'and end this fucking war' (2:21-2:26). Cope (2010, pp. 132-133) observes a similar technique

The Black Dahlia Murder make frequent use of black metal-style screams alongside growls (*Miasma*, 2005), with vocalist Trevor Strnad sometimes moving from one to the other within the same lyric phrase.[90]

Aligning low growls with death metal and high screams with black metal has precedent in metal studies (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 32), and appears frequently in participant discourse. Smialek's corpus analysis of fan reviews on *Encyclopaedia Metallum* concludes that death metal 'uses guttural growls (as opposed to shrieks or screams)' (2015, p. 120),[91] views supported by his spectrographic analyses of death metal vocals that 'cluster around the low formant frequencies', while black metal vocals are 'more dispersed, clustering around the higher-frequency regions' (p. 255).

The final distorted style is arguably less referenced and discussed than the preceding types, but it has become prominent as more artists utilise distorted vocals. In short, roaring refers to a middle ground between growls and screams that is closer to the vocalist's middle register than upper or lower registers. Bands like Lamb of God 'favour a more mid-range approach that moves away from the redolent horror style of [Deicide vocalist Glen] Benton and focuses instead on strained, tortured and venomous rap' (Cope 2012, p. 133). Roaring has been used in many metal genres alongside different types of clean and distorted vocals, and is arguably closest to a mainstream metal vocal type in the twenty-first century. Indeed, bands like Slipknot and Five Finger Death Punch use roars to varying degrees while also incorporating clean vocals.[92] Twenty-first century metalcore is also associated with roaring vocals, with the technique featuring prominently in the vocals of Jesse Leach (Killswitch

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on Deicide's 'Fuck Your God' (*Scars of the Crucifix*, 2004). Erbe describes this practice as a 'vocalist employ[ing] different registers to yield homorhythmic lines which are then layered as a means of broadening the perceived vocal range' (2014, p. 60).

[90] As heard on 'A Shrine to Madness' (*Ritual*, 2011) when Strnad moves between growls and screams vocalising 'When the masks of mockery shall disguise our wicked <u>eyes</u>. To the death of all, celebrate the emp<u>ty breath of fall</u>. The 31st t'will not go silent as long as evil doth <u>dwell in man</u>' (1:37-1:55; screams underlined).

[91] *Encyclopaedia Metallum: The Metal Archives* is an online database of metal bands maintained by metal/hardcore participants (https://www.metal-archives.com/, accessed 5/9/2017).

[92] Slipknot, *Vol. 3: (The Subliminal Verses)* (2004); Five Finger Death Punch, *War Is the Answer* (2009).

Engage), Howard Jones (ex-Killswitch Engage, Devil You Know), Brian Fair (Shadows Fall), Byron Davis (God Forbid), and Phil Labonte (All That Remains).[93] Metallic hardcore bands from the early-to-mid-1990s onwards have utilised roars to some degree. Vocalists Karl Buechner (Earth Crisis), Mike Score (All Out War), and Dave Peters (Throwdown) all employ vocals that are at times a mix between overdriven hardcore vocals and a distorted roar. [94]

Some metal/hardcore genres seem especially beholden to a specific vocal delivery, while others are known for mixing multiple types. Genres like death metal and black metal have become associated with a 'no singing' rule (hence the webzine *No Clean Singing*),[95] but many twenty-first century metalcore bands use clean and distorted vocals as a compositional device demarcating form. Bands associated with the New Wave of American Heavy Metal (see chapter six) frequently 'highlight the mood changes from one section to another by stark contrasts in vocal timbre where death growls and screams suddenly change to traditional singing' (Cope 2010, p. 129).[96] Accordingly, it is worth reiterating the relationship between small-scale compositional decisions and large-scale perceptions of genre. Like other instrumentation, choices regarding the use of specific vocal types should be understood as part of the interplay between metal/hardcore genres. The use of clean as well as distorted vocals by artists like Opeth and The Faceless is a significant factor in their music being received as progressive death metal (Hasan 2015a; Noyan 2012),[97] since clean vocals are largely understood as outside the purview of death metal. By contrast, bands like Deicide and Suffocation are rarely (if ever) perceived as anything other than death metal due to their adherence to death metal generic norms (including consistent use of distorted vocals). It is not necessarily the case that artists feel limited to using a certain vocal delivery because of its

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[93] Killswitch Engage, *Alive or Just Breathing* (2002) and *The End of Heartache* (2004); Shadows Fall, *The War Within* (2004); God Forbid, *IV: Constitution of Treason* (2005); All That Remains, *The Fall of Ideals* (2006).

[94] Earth Crisis, *Destroy the Machines* (1995); All Out War, *Truth in the Age of Lies* (1997); Throwdown, *You Don't Have to be Blood to be Family* (2001).

[95] http://www.nocleansinging.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[96] Cope cites examples in Killswitch Engage's 'Breathe Life' (*The End of Heartache*, 2004) and Trivium's 'Pull Harder on the Strings of Your Martyr' (*Ascendancy*, 2005).

[97] Opeth, *Blackwater Park* (2001); The Faceless, *Autotheism* (2012).

generic affiliation, but they will usually be aware of the potential for enculturated listeners to link a given vocal style to a given genre. In this paradigm, bands may signal their general generic affiliation through the use of distorted or clean vocals (or both).

Guitars

Perhaps even more so than distorted vocals, '[t]he distorted guitar has always been the key signifier of metal' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 31). The distorted electric guitar (including distorted electric bass) dominates the composition and performance of metal and hardcore, and has done so since the first metal bands of the 1970s (Cope 2010, p. 70). One product of this ubiquity has been the development of idiosyncratic instrumental practice. As with vocals, the use of distortion on guitars exhibits nuance and subtly of gradation.

Language used to refer to guitar distortion can range dramatically from highly technical (noting the kinds of distortion pedal used and even supposing the equipment brands and EQ settings) to the general and metaphorical (a 'sludgy' or 'grimy' tone, for instance). Like vocals and other aspects of metal/hardcore music culture, descriptive language may be linked to (and therefore affect) notions of genre, style, and scene. So-called '"scooped" guitar tones' (Phillipov 2012, p. 82), referring to the practice of setting the midrange of the EQ much lower than the low and high bands thereby scooping out the midrange,[98] are notable for their common association with Florida death metal bands of the early 1990s (Berger 1999a, p. 176). That such a specific term describing distorted guitar timbre (and the method by which it is produced) may be correlated with a genre generally, and even an individual time/place-based scene, speaks to the relationship between small and large-scale phenomena. Kahn-Harris observes subtle differences between the distorted guitar sounds commonly used in death metal and black metal (2007, p. 32), also noting distinctions between characteristic distortion timbres found in various death metal scenes. In death metal, the 'Florida sound' – 'extremely "clear",

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[98] '"Scooped" tones are created by boosting the guitar's extreme high and low overtones and sharply reducing the mid-range overtones, either by using the instrument's onboard amplifier tone controls or an external equalizer (Berger 1999a, 176 n.2)' (Phillipov 2012, p. 87).

compressed but still heavily distorted' – contrasts with the 'Sunlight sound', 'a far "fuzzier" form of distortion […] characterized by its lack of clarity' (p. 32).

Swedish death metal band Entombed have become widely recognised for the distorted guitar tone utilised on debut album *Left Hand Path* (1990), variously referred to by association with the band, 'the legendary "Entombed sound"' (J. Bennett 2009b, p. 110), the recording studio, 'Sunlight sound' (Ekeroth 2008, p. 155),[99] or the guitar pedal used on the recording, 'HM-2 distortion' (Schafer 2013).[100] This guitar tone is credited with distinguishing Entombed and similar Swedish death metal bands like Dismember from their American counterparts like Obituary and Death (J. Bennett 2009b, p. 109). Whereas Florida-based death metal bands scooped their mid-range, Sunlight Studio engineer Tomas Skogsberg has been heralded as 'the king of midrange' (in Mudrian 2004, p. 98). At a time when Swedish and American death metal were relatively similar in composition, the timbre of the guitar in particular became a factor in differentiating one style from the other. The guitar tone has become so thoroughly associated with Entombed that the term 'Entombedcore' has been used by various commentators to describe a subgenre of hardcore (Neilstein 2016b; Ramirez 2016). Referring to 'pissed off crusty hardcore/grindcore groups coming out of the woodwork lately with grungy monochromatic artwork and pedalboards filled with nothing but the Boss HM-2 pedal' (Rowe 2013b), bands like Trap Them, Nails, and Black Breath are grouped as such in part because of their use of a specific distortion tone. Much like the scooped tone of the Florida sound, the small-scale detail of specific distortion used by a single band (Entombed) has since come to connote large-scale conceptions of a death metal scene (the Stockholm sound) and a subgenre of hardcore (Entombedcore).

The practice of 'down tuning' electric guitars and basses in metal/hardcore is often traced to the supposed originators of the genre, Black Sabbath. Guitarist

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[99] The name derived from the studio in which *Left Hand Path* was recorded, Sunlight Studios (Stockholm, Sweden).

[100] '[T]he sound was actually in the Boss Heavy Metal pedal, with basically all the switches set to ten' (Entombed drummer Nicke Andersson in Ekeroth 2008, p. 84),

Tony Iommi, 'one of the true pioneers of low tunings in metal' (Hodgson 2011), is widely credited with popularising down tuning (Cope 2010, p. 32), a practice he developed as the result of injuries suffered during an industrial accident.[101] Although '[t]he first two Sabbath albums are full of standard tuning', by 1973 'the mighty Iommi was tuning all the way down to C# (C# F# B E G# C#) for songs like the still-crushingly-heavy-today "Sabbath Bloody Sabbath" [*Sabbath Bloody Sabbath*, 1973]' (Hodgson 2011). While tuning the instrument down a semitone to Eb is relatively common in various (guitar-based) popular musics because it 'leaves a little headroom in case those high notes are just a little too high for the vocalist to comfortably reach', the use of C# tuning on Metallica's 'The Thing that Should Not Be' (*Master of Puppets*, 1986) 'was a crucial example of a metal band pushing the tuning down for sonic effect rather than to placate a straining vocalist' (Hodgson 2011). In this regard, Metallica are one of the earliest high-profile instances of metal/hardcore artists down tuning for (apparently) purely compositional reasons.

The relationship between heaviness, 'the defining feature of the genre' (Berger and Fales 2005, p. 181), and guitar tuning is a common trope in metal/hardcore discourse. Recent academic texts on metal/hardcore music production afford significant room to discussion of heaviness in relation to tuning (Mynett 2012, 2013; Thomas 2015), and the supposed correlation of low tuning with heaviness has been disputed by journalists (Lee 2011) and parodied by musicians (Jared Dines 2015). Drawing on the work of Simon Zagorski-Thomas (2012, 2015), Mark Mynett examines the concept of 'sonic weight' (2013, pp. 44-45), noting that 'down tuning is often considered to be a pre-requisite for the music's overall sonic impact' (p. 44). However, '[d]espite the correlation between low frequencies and sonic weight, to restrict the focus of CMM's [Contemporary Metal Music's] "heaviness" to the low frequency ranges alone would be a mistake' (p. 44).[102] While Cosmo Lee contends that '[h]eaviness is

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[101] 'After losing the tips of the middle and ring fingers of his right hand in an industrial accident at age 17, Iommi began to tune his strings to lower pitches so that the homemade thimbles he'd fitted on the ends of his injured fingers could bend guitar strings more easily' (Guitar World Staff 2015).

[102] Mynett describes other elements of heaviness including perceived size, proximity, and energy of the sound activity (2013, pp. 41-51).

a totality that includes playing style, musical material, band dynamics, and, in the case of recordings, production' (2011), it is nevertheless noteworthy that '[e]xtreme metal bands have taken downtuning to extremes' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 32). As well as down tuning every string on the guitar/bass, many metal/hardcore also utilise 'dropped' tunings whereby the lowest string is tuned one tone below the rest of the guitar, resulting in a perfect fifth interval between the lowest two strings.[103] The popularity of dropped tunings likely results from the centrality of power chords in metal/hardcore composition (see below), since dropping the lowest string 'makes it possible to play power chords with a single finger barred across the lowest two strings' (Hodgson 2011).

As well as down/dropped-tuned six-string guitars, extended range guitars with seven or eight strings are not uncommon in metal/hardcore. First popularised among a rock/metal audience by Steve Vai (Cocchi 2014), the seven-string guitar was widely used by prominent nu metal bands (Korn, Limp Bizkit, and Deftones), and later by eminent deathcore bands (Suicide Silence, Whitechapel).[104] Swedish band Meshuggah are commonly associated with eight-string guitars after first employing the instruments on fourth album, *Nothing* (2002), tuned down a semitone.[105] Extended range guitars with particularly low tunings have become more prominent during the twenty-first century, with some artists down tuning as far as dropped E or below.[106]

Such is the ubiquity of down and dropped tunings in myriad metal/hardcore genres during the twenty-first century that providing an exhaustive list of bands and their tunings is impossible. That said, however, it is worth noting those instances where specific tunings have become commonly associated with a given artist, scene, or genre. Dropped B 'is perhaps best known as "the Slipknot

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[103] Dropped D tuning, for instance, refers to simply tuning the low E string down a tone while leaving the rest of the strings in standard tuning, moving from E-A-D-G-B-E to D-A-D-G-B-E.

[104] In standard tuning, the most common variety of seven-string guitar used in metal/hardcore includes an additional string tuned a perfect fourth lower than the low E: B-E-A-D-G-B-E.

[105] Most eight-string guitars used in metal/hardcore include an additional low string tuned a perfect fourth below the low B found on a seven-string guitar: F#-B-E-A-D-G-B-E. Meshuggah's eight-string guitars are down tuned by a semitone: F-Bb-Eb-Ab-Db-Gb-Bb-Eb.

[106] Animals as Leaders tune eight-string guitars in dropped E: E-B-E-A-D-G-B-E (*Animals as Leaders*, 2009). Within the Ruins guitarist Joe Cocchi tunes his seven-string guitar based on a six-string in dropped F, with an added C below: C-F-C-F-A#-D-G (*Phenomena*, 2014).

tuning"' (Hodgson 2011) after the guitarists Jim Root and Mick Thompson first utilised the tuning on debut album, *Slipknot* (1999).[107] The widespread use of dropped C tuning (C-G-C-F-A-D) by several prominent metalcore bands of the early twenty-first century (including Killswitch Engage, Shadows Fall, God Forbid, and As I Lay Dying) could lead one to associate the tuning with (that period of) the genre. In a similar vein, seven-string guitars are commonly allied to nu metal, while eight-string guitars are often considered a constituent part of djent (see below). Despite the prevalence and variety of non-standard guitar/bass tunings in metal/hardcore one can still observe a relationship between the ostensibly small-scale detail of instrument tuning and the much broader concept of genre.

One of the most commonly utilised and recognised guitar techniques in metal/hardcore is the power chord, so much so that '[i]f there is one feature that underpins the coherence of heavy metal as a genre, it is the power chord' (Walser 1993, p. 2). Its seeming omnipresence in metal/hardcore is reflected in use of the term in myriad texts on metal/hardcore,[108] some of which are worth considering here. A power chord is '[p]roduced by playing the musical interval of a perfect fourth or fifth on a heavily amplified and distorted electric guitar' (Walser 1993, p. 2), although 'an intervallic formation in itself is not enough – the employment of distortion is essential to the formation of a power chord' (Lilja 2009, p. 103). The power chord is often understood to function as 'the musical basis of heavy metal' (Walser 1993, p. 2), and may even be considered metal/hardcore's 'basic unit of pitch' (Pieslak 2007, p. 219).[109] The widespread use of distorted power chords in metal/hardcore can likely be attributed to (at least) three factors: (1) ease of performing the technique, (2) the production of specific harmonics, and (3) the power chord's status as a standardised compositional device in earlier metal/hardcore and rock.

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[107] Dropped B refers to tuning all strings down a minor third, then the lowest string down another tone, resulting in B-F#-B-E-G#-C#.

[108] See, for instance, Walser (1993, pp. 2, 43), Kahn-Harris (2007, pp. 31-32), Lilja (2009, pp. 102-104), and Phillipov (2012, p. xiii).

[109] Pieslak is here describing the use of power chords in the music of Meshuggah, but his characterisation is apt for metal/hardcore more generally.

In their simplest form, as a dyad of root and perfect fifth, power chords can be performed with the use of just two fingers on the fretting hand, or only one finger when using an open string as the root of the chord. The ease with which one can play a power chord is increased when a guitarist utilises a dropped tuning, since the interval between the lowest two strings becomes a perfect fifth, allowing the lowest power chord to be played without using the fretting hand at all. The use of distortion when playing a power chord produces 'resultant tones' (Walser 1993, p. 43; Phillipov 2012, p. xviii), 'harmonics that are those of a new fundamental frequency lying one octave below the original root' (Lilja 2009, p. 112).[110] With a power chord, 'all the higher partials belong to the same harmonic series' (Lilja 2009, p. 113) and 'the strong occurrence of C# [in an A power chord] means that the major third is present even though it is not actually played' (p. 114). By contrast, '[i]t appears that distorted [major and minor] triads have more dissonant qualities than power chords. This might explain why the power chord is the most frequent chord structure in heavily distorted music' (p. 114). Regardless of these more technical details, the prevalence of power chords in metal/hardcore may also be understood as an example of a compositional device inherited from previous metal/hardcore artists, including some of the supposed originators of the genre like Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath (Phillipov 2012, p. xviii).

Notwithstanding their extensive use elsewhere in metal/hardcore, power chords are notable by their (relative) absence in genres like djent and, to a lesser extent, nu metal. Discussing Meshuggah, Jonathan Pieslak observes that 'the tuning of the eight-string guitar limited their use of distorted power chords on particular songs to single pitches' (2007, pp. 219-220), since '[i]n this lower register of the eight-string guitar, the fifth of the power chord tends to obscure rather than reinforce the fundamental or root in more active passages' (p. 220). In very low tunings, 'traditional power-chord based riffs risk sounding too "muddy"', and 'sound clearest when used to create a mid-tempo groove, often using only the lowest string' (Smialek 2015, p. 78). In part due to this technical

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[110] This fundamental frequency, or 'distortion fundamental' (Pettinen et al. 2009 cited in Lilja 2009, p. 113), 'may be regarded as a chord root, rather than the chord root that is actually played' (Lilja 2009, p. 113).

constraint, genres like djent and nu metal (not to mention artists like After the Burial and Carnifex who use eight-string guitars in other genres) tend to employ power chords more sparingly than the majority of metal/hardcore. In this regard, the comparative lack of power chords becomes 'marked' (Smialek 2015, p. 226) as an aspect of (sub)genre because of their ubiquity in other metal/hardcore genres.[111]

Alongside power chords, techniques like palm-muting and tremolo-picking are prevalent in many metal/hardcore genres. Achieved by resting the bottom of the palm of the picking hand on a string between the pick and the bridge, 'greatly emphasizing both the lower frequencies and the very high overtones of the sound envelope, as well as cutting out the mid-range, palm muting results in a distortion that generally sounds tighter and more precise' (Pillsbury 2006, p. 11). Generating 'a heavier sound' (Smialek 2015, p. 94), 'the aural and performative differences between palm-muted and nonpalm-muted notes […] provide important means for rhetorical contrast within a section of music and contribute to the flow of energy across a song' (Pillsbury 2006, pp. 11-12). The use of different picking patterns (e.g. down picking or alternate picking) as well as interspersing palm-muted and non-palm-muted notes can create interesting rhythmic stresses in otherwise constant passages.[112] Tremolo-picking describes the process of rapid alternate picking (alternating down and upstrokes with the pick) creating very short note durations (see Figure 1). This rapid succession of short notes can give the aural impression of sustain and, especially when paired with drums performing fewer hits, may produce a 'paradoxical stasis […making] the music seem both fast and slow' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 33). While tremolo-picking is used in many metal/hardcore genres, the technique is omnipresent in discussions of black metal, thanks to its prominence in the work of multiple Norwegian bands in black metal's 'second

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[111] Smialek borrows the term 'markedness' from Robert Hatten (1994) to describe elements of composition or performance that carry specific connotations when used in a given context (Smialek 2015, pp. 226-229).
[112] Chris Rubey, former guitarist of The Devil Wears Prada, refers to palm-muted and non-palm-muted notes as 'chugs and burps' (Guitar World 2011, 0:37-0:39).

wave' (Spracklen 2014, p. 185) and subsequent positioning as an essential element of black metal composition.[113]

Figure 1: Tremolo riff from the introduction to Shadows Fall's 'The Light That Blinds' (*The War Within*, 2004; 0:44-1:05).

Drums

First used in jazz and, later, rock (Nyman 2013), double-kick drumming is achieved either by using two kick drums or a double-kick pedal (two pedals connected to two beaters striking the same kick drum), and has become ubiquitous in metal/hardcore. Despite earlier usage, double-kick drumming is commonly described as an integral component of thrash and death metal (Phillipov 2012, p. 85). Dave Lombardo's use of double-kick drumming on Slayer's *Reign in Blood* (1986) has received considerable praise (Phillipov 2012, p. 85; Nyman 2013), with D.X. Ferris suggesting that the drum break toward the end of opening track 'Angel of Death' (4:23-4:27) is 'the most

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[113] See, for example, the constant tremolo-picking in Darkthrone's 'Transilvanian Hunger' (*Transilvanian Hunger*, 1994). For a more recent example showcasing tremolo-picking in contemporary black metal, see 'Der stille Fluss' by Der Weg einer Freiheit (*Agonie*, 2011).

influential moment in metal drumming' (2008, p. 117). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that *Reign in Blood* 'set the bar for an emerging genre called death metal' (p. 21), double-kick drumming became 'a huge part of death metal music' (Cannibal Corpse bassist Alex Webster in Cannibal Corpse 2008, 37:37-37:39) but has since been widely employed in most metal/hardcore genres. Utilising double-kick drumming, metal/hardcore drummers can match their attacks to that of the bass and guitar(s) regardless of tempo and note duration, allowing for unison passage like those found in many breakdowns (see below).

While double-kick drumming may be used for almost any beat in metal/hardcore, the technique is usually seen as an integral part of a more specific device known as the blast-beat. In their simplest form, 'blast beats consist of a rapid alternating pattern between the kick drum and snare, usually accentuated with the ride cymbal or hi-hat' (Hasan 2015b), but their extensive use within metal/hardcore has led to multiple variations of the beat. The origin of the blast-beat is somewhat ambiguous. Andrew L. Cope notes that the 'roots of the blast-beat may found in the work of Motörhead' (2010, p. 100).[114] Daniel Ekeroth credits Swedish hardcore band Asocial with employing what they called 'the "one-beat" because the snare drum was hit constantly […which] was basically what would later be called the "blast beat"' (2008, p. 22), while Phillipov notes other 'early proponents of blast beats' (2012, p. 86) including D.R.I. (Dirty Rotten Imbeciles), S.O.D., and Sepultura.[115] Anthrax and S.O.D. drummer Charlie Benante contends that S.O.D.'s 'Milk' (*Speak English or Die*, 1985) 'is the first time the blast beat is ever featured on a record' (B. Moore 2016), but former Napalm Death drummer Mick Harris 'developed the idiom "blast beat" for the wickedly fast 64th notes he played on the snare drum' (Mudrian 2004, pp. 34-35).[116] Although blast-beats have strong associations

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[114] '"Ace of Spades" ([*Ace of Spades*] 1980) features a fast bass-snare pattern that is leading towards the blast-beats of the mid 1980s' (Cope 2010, p. 100).

[115] Ekeroth's claim is in reference to Asocial's demo *How Could Hardcore Be Any Worse?* (1982), while Phillipov cites D.R.I.'s *Dirty Rotten LP* (1983), S.O.D.'s *Speak English or Die* (1985), and Sepultura's *Morbid Visions* (1986).

[116] As heard on Napalm Death debut album, *Scum* (1987). Despite the widespread use of double-kick drumming as part of blast-beats by other artists, Harris contends that '[t]here's only one way to play the blast beat. […] I played it the right way, and the only way there is to play it' (in Grow 2009, p. 60), suggesting that his use of a single-kick drum on *Scum* is essential to the blast-beat.

with specific genres like death metal (Phillipov 2012, p. 85) and grindcore (Mudrian 2004, p. 35; Alvarez 2016), '[t]he blast beat is more or less ubiquitous in metal today' (Hasan 2015b). This profusion has resulted in the development of various blast-beat types that some associate with specific scenes, subgenres, or artists (see Figure 2).[117]
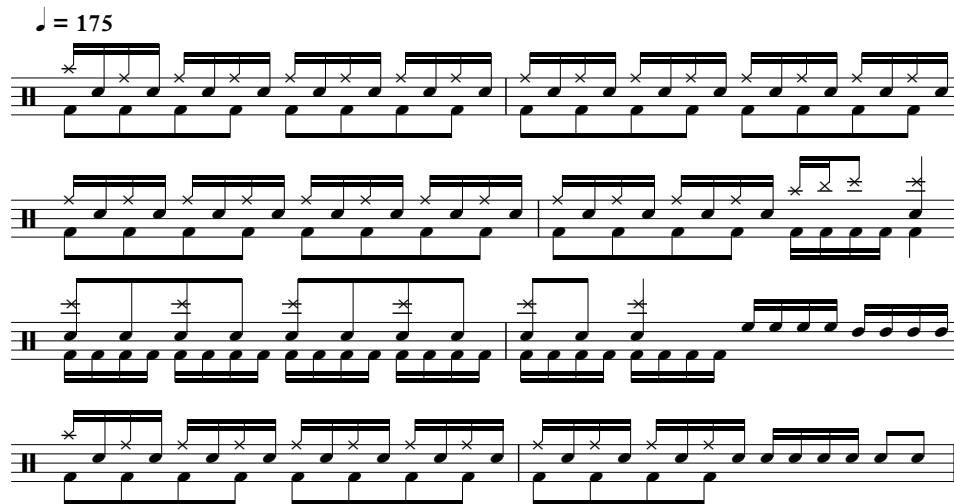
Figure 2: Blast-beat section from The Black Dahlia Murder's 'Black Valor' (*Deflorate*, 2009; 0:30-0:38).

Breakdowns

Breakdowns are a compositional device particular to metal/hardcore that connote relatively specific combinations of guitar riffs and drumbeats. Though there is some debate over the origin of the term and its use as compositional device, 'the breakdown has existed in some form or another since the advent of death metal (at least)' (Rosenberg 2015). The extensive use of breakdowns in multiple genres has resulted in various terminology to describe these 'mosh parts' (Pillsbury 2006, p. 10).[118] Doug Moore outlines 'three options for heavy-part riffs' (2012a): slowdown, slam, and breakdown. The slowdown 'appears

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[117] Michelle Phillipov outlines four varieties of blast-beats, each connected to one or two specific artists: Euroblast played by Carcass and Napalm Death, gravity blast played by Cryptopsy and Origin (both technical death metal bands), Cannibal blast and Suffocation blast named after Cannibal Corpse and Suffocation, respectively (2012, p. 86).

[118] In his article searching for 'the best breakdown of all time' (2011b), Sergeant D cites breakdowns in thrash metal (Slayer), death metal (Morbid Angel, Cannibal Corpse, Suffocation), hardcore (Judge, Earth Crisis, Unbroken, Hatebreed, Buried Alive), sludge (Crowbar), and heavy/groove metal (Pantera).

frequently in early American death metal. […] This type of heavy part is defined by a noticeable drop in tempo, paired with more open picking-hand patterns' (D. Moore 2012a), and is therefore closest to Phillipov's (2012, p. 121) example of a breakdown in Cannibal Corpse's 'A Skull Full of Maggots' (*Eaten Back to Life*, 1990, 1:39-1:43). By contrast, 'slams don't necessarily involve a tempo drop, […and] also usually involve chromatic, palm-muted chord progressions', whereas '[b]reakdowns differ from slams in their increased simplicity. They typically consist of single chugged chords, interspersed with pauses and occasionally with other chords for contrast' (D. Moore 2012a). Breakdowns usually feature drum beats played in half-time, emphasising beats one and three of a 4/4 bar (as opposed to beats two and four in a back beat, for instance). Keeping time with crotchet or minim cymbal hits, breakdown kick drum patterns tend to follow the guitar/bass in unison or simply play on the first beat of the bar, allowing one to hear the whole drum beat as a very slow back beat (see Figures 5 and 6 below).

Smialek observes that the slam terminology has only become customary during the twenty-first century (2015, p. 230), noting that 'breakdown' referred to both devices in earlier parlance (p. 208). This divergence may be attributed to the increased popularity of metalcore and deathcore bands during the first decade of the new millennium, both of which have an overt association with breakdowns (Boozeman 2015; Smialek 2015, p. 85). Where an older death metal breakdown 'can be thought of as a kind of bridge section since it usually occurs just over midway through a song, traditionally happens only once, and presents contrasting material', breakdowns in deathcore, for instance, 'occur multiple times throughout a song, partially taking on the role of a chorus. Newer breakdowns tend to be based on a slow rhythmic groove, playing with syncopated accents that appear alongside intermittent pauses' (Smialek 2015, p. 230). Smialek's example of an older breakdown (slam) in Suffocation's 'Pierced from Within' (*Pierced from Within*, 1995; 2:18-2:51; Figure 3), is in stark

contrast to newer breakdowns used in deathcore songs like Whitechapel's 'Vicer Exciser' (*The Somatic Defilement*, 2007; 0:54-1:08; Figure 4).[119]

Figure 3: Slam section from Suffocation's 'Pierced from Within' (*Pierced from Within*, 1995; 2:18-2:51).

Figure 4: Breakdown from Whitechapel's 'Vicer Exciser' (*The Somatic Defilement*, 2007; 0:54-1:01).

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[119] It should be noted that 'Vicer Exciser' includes multiple breakdowns (0:39-0:54, 0:54-1:08, 1:31-1:46, 1:47-2:02, 2:32-2:47) that each contrast with slam riffs.

Despite claims that '[o]ne of Suffocation's trademarks, breakdowns, has spawned an entire metal subgenre: deathcore' (Lee 2009, p. 47), breakdowns as used in metalcore and, subsequently, deathcore, are most obviously inspired by those of hardcore during the 1990s. Alongside their impact on death metal (see 'Extreme Metal' below), Slayer's 'Raining Blood' (*Reign in Blood*, 1986) 'is pretty much the "patient zero" of breakdowns', since the 'song defined the breakdown as we know it, inspiring a whole generation of hardcore bands to play chugga chugga riffs' (Sergeant D 2011b). The breakdown in 'Raining Blood' (2:10-2:38) seems a clear inspiration for those found in Pantera's 'Domination' (*Cowboys from Hell*, 1990, 3:51-4:38) and Earth Crisis' 'Firestorm' (*Firestorm*, 1993, 0:25-0:48).[120] The latter of these examples could be described as the prototypical metalcore breakdown, insomuch as it is the simplest example of this form of breakdown: low, palm-muted power chord quavers with regular rests in unison with the kick, accompanied by cymbals playing crotchets, and the snare landing on beat three (Figure 5). Moreover, bands like Earth Crisis and Hatebreed, 'a single-minded machine committed to perfecting the hardcore breakdown' (Sergeant D 2011b), position breakdowns as a prominent compositional device by utilising them in multiple sections of a song and/or placing particular emphasis on them. Breakdowns by metalcore bands like Killswitch Engage and Bleeding Through are more clearly indebted to hardcore breakdowns than those found in death metal (see Figures 6 and 7).

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[120] Note that Smialek refers to breakdowns in both Slayer's 'Raining Blood' and 'Pantera's 'Domination' as 'proto-breakdown sections' (2015, p. 93).

Figure 5: Breakdown from Earth Crisis's 'Firestorm' (*Firestorm*, 1993; 0:25-0:48).

Figure 6: Breakdown from Killswitch Engage's 'Numbered Days' (*Alive or Just Breathing*, 2002; 1:10-1:30).

Figure 7: Breakdown from Bleeding Through's 'Love Lost in a Hail of Gun Fire' (*This is Love, This is Murderous*, 2003; 1:25-1:52).

The extensive use of breakdowns in metalcore and deathcore during the twenty-first century has led to a clear association between the compositional device and the genres (D. Moore 2012a). Evergreen Terrace's 'My Heart Beats in Breakdowns' (*Burned Alive by Time*, 2002) and Bury Your Dead's *Beauty and the Breakdown* (2006), not to mention the shout of 'woah, breakdown!' during Unearth's 'This Lying World' (*The Oncoming Storm*, 2004; 3:44-3:47), reinforce this affiliation discursively. Though still employed as mosh parts, breakdowns in twenty-first century metalcore are often more complex than previous iterations, including rhythmic and/or melodic variation. Regardless, for some metal/hardcore participants, breakdown 'is a four letter word' since 'during the aughties, breakdown-centric bands overran the metal world like kudzu' (D. Moore 2012a). More specifically, breakdowns are sometimes classified as a gimmick (Sergeant D 2013) or cliché (Gorguts guitarist Kevin Hufnagel in Hammond 2014) that distinguishes deathcore from 'real' metal: 'the only reason we started out as a deathcore band was because we weren't

talented enough to play real metal' (All Shall Perish guitarist Ben Orum in Stewart-Panko 2011, p. 30). In this way, the metal/hardcore breakdown as compositional device is understood as a key element separating one genre from another and, further, as a rule against which one may ascribe value to genres.

Djent

Perhaps the most overt example of small-scale technical detail linked explicitly to a large-scale genre label is that of djent.[121] Originally used as an onomatopoeic term for the sound produced by Meshuggah guitarists' heavily palm-muted octave power chords – 'basically a normal power chord with an added 5th which gives it that iconic "djenty" Meshuggah sound' (Kahney 2010) – djent has become a genre like any other, replete with particular compositional and performance practices, along with websites dedicated to the music.[122] While some continue to debate whether or not djent is a genre (Neilstein 2015b; Synn 2015) or a 'microgenre' (Thomson 2011), the term is now commonly used to refer to bands like Tesseract, Periphery, Animals as Leaders, and Meshuggah, though it is 'worth calling into question whether Meshuggah, as the accidental progenitors of the genre who preceded its supposed birth by a decade, should even be called "djent"' (Neilstein 2010). Just as 'the term "THRAK" seems to have arisen as an onomatopoeiac [*sic*] label for polymetric combinations of percussive chords' (Robison 2002, p. 235) as used on King Crimson's *THRAK* (1995), djent covers the use of 7 or 8-string guitars, syncopated guitar riffs that juxtapose open and palm-muted notes, polyrhythm between drums and guitars (Pieslak 2007), as well as the djent chord.[123] In this way, the term djent refers directly to a sound produced by a specific technique on a specific instrument, but refers indirectly to compositional devices and, eventually, to an entire subgenre of metal/hardcore.

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[121] A similar example might be d-beat, referring to both a drumbeat associated with hardcore punk band Discharge (hence 'd-beat') used extensively in later hardcore and metal, and with a subgenre of hardcore known as d-beat (Reyes 2008, p. 81).

[122] See, for example, www.got-djent.com and www.itdjents.com (both accessed 5/9/2017).

[123] Fellsilent, *The Hidden Words* (2008); Volumes, *The Concept of Dreaming* (2010); Monuments, *Gnosis* (2012).

Metal/Hardcore Genre Typology

This section is designed primarily to offer an overview of some of the most prominent metal/hardcore genres to provide the reader with a foundation in the metal/hardcore generic milieu. Following Krims's model of a 'genre system' (2000, p. 46), I draw principally from extant literature to reflect those distinctions, conventions, and perceptions common in metal/hardcore discourse. The genre typology should function as a starting point for the ways in which metal/hardcore genres have been and are conceptualised and discussed by various participants, as well as a basic summary of compositional/performance-related characteristics. In this respect, the current section might be better understood as a genre topography: the intention is not to introduce new classifications, but to survey those already-established. However, the nature of metal/hardcore genre constructs is so convoluted and interconnected as to necessitate somewhat artificial divisions, not to mention certain omissions. To be clear, conceptions of the following genres are not fixed, their constituent artists and artefacts not universally agreed, and not all metal/hardcore genres are included.[124] The following elucidation of these genres is brief and inevitably crude, 'very much a blunt instrument' (Krims 2000, p. 55), but a key point of departure for this research is the fact that (metal/hardcore) artists and artefacts can be both easily grouped with similar examples and, *at the same time*, ceaselessly equivocal. Nonetheless, a broad working knowledge of genres as understood in everyday participant discourse will prove essential to the more detailed arguments put forward in the following chapters.

For the sake of simplicity (and to reflect how these genres are discussed in academic and popular discourse) I utilise four umbrella terms to group genres that share certain qualities: Heavy Metal, Punk and Hardcore, Extreme Metal, and Hybrid Genres.[125] Heavy Metal is used to group the more traditional strains of metal, those bands who commonly employ elements drawn from the blues and rock in their composition, live presentation, and iconography. Most of the

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[124] An impossible undertaking, as demonstrated in chapter one.

[125] Capitalisation is used as above whenever the author refers to these umbrella terms to avoid confusion with previous texts.

artists included under the umbrella of Heavy Metal either have direct links to metal's earliest years or are part of a revivalist trend, however this group also includes those mainstream metal artists that have emerged since the 1980s. Punk and Hardcore refers to genres that reportedly evolved from punk rock music, primarily in the US and UK, and have since exhibited varying degrees of confluence with metal music. Accordingly, attention is concentrated on those Punk and Hardcore genres with the most overt relationship to metal. Some of the genres in this group espouse anti-mainstream, do-it-yourself mentalities (e.g. straight edge), while others have courted significant commercial and mainstream success (pop punk). Extreme Metal bands largely eschew overt sonic influence from the blues and rock, beginning to incorporate ideas from Punk and Hardcore, and tend to exhibit ideologies of exclusivity. The grouping of these genres as Extreme Metal reflects previous categorisation in academia (e.g. Kahn-Harris 2007), and recognises their continued sharing of (general) compositional/performance-related traits, fans, and industries, and common proclivity for anti-mainstream sentiment. The final group, Hybrid Genres, refers to those genres that are explicit hybrids of other metal/hardcore genres (metalcore) or of metal and non-metal genres (nu metal).[126] Many Hybrid Genres achieved widespread popularity during the early twenty-first century, but have received the least academic consideration of the four groups. For each of these terms I identify prominent genres and broadly representative artists/artefacts, along with oft-cited elements of composition/performance.[127]

Heavy Metal

While 'heavy metal' is often used in a general sense referring to all metal music,[128] Heavy Metal here connotes genres that share a clear lineage with early forms of the music during the late 1960s and early '70s. Artists like Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, and the Grateful Dead, variously considered heavy

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[126] For somewhat different reasons, Smialek (2015) groups nu metal and metalcore together as 'abject genres', as explored in chapter six.

[127] 'Certainly, for each [genre] explained, many sub-genres could be fleshed out, and what at one level is described as relative homogeneity may secretly bear within it the greatest variety, a number of objects whose resemblance can be posited but whose difference is also patent' (Krims 2000, p. 54).

[128] My preference for 'metal' over 'heavy metal' is explained in chapter one (pp. 29-30).

metal or hard rock (Walser 1993; Weinstein 2000) constitute some of the earliest artists under this umbrella, though some identify Black Sabbath as the first heavy metal band (Cope 2010; Popoff 2015). After Heavy Metal 'began to attain stylistic identity in the late 1960s as a "harder" sort of hard rock' (Walser 1993, p. 3), the instrumentation, compositional and performance-related aspects became normative during Heavy Metal's 'phase of crystallization in the mid-1970s' (Weinstein 2000, p. 14).

Comprising bands like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (commonly known by the acronym NWOBHM) furthered the distinction between hard rock and heavy metal during the late 1970s by employing high-pitched 'operatic' vocals, dual-guitar harmonised riffs and melodies, and faster tempos, as well as leather attire and visual representations of power (Waksman 2009; Cope 2010). During the 1980s, glam metal bands Mötley Crüe, Quiet Riot, Poison and others gained widespread commercial success by fusing the heavy metal tropes of riffs and guitar solos with high cost production, and hooks indebted to pop music (Weinstein 2000). Thrash metal of the 1980s took elements of NWOBHM and fused them with the punk ethos of resistance and aggression. Thrash metal bands frequently utilised fast tempos, intricate guitar solos, heavy riffs designed to get the listener headbanging, and gruff, aggressive vocals that toed the line between clean and distorted. Alongside thrash's 'Big Four' (Walser 1993, p.14) – Metallica, Megadeth, Anthrax, and Slayer – bands like Exodus and Testament produced music that was consciously abrasive compared to both previous forms of metal and, especially, then-popular glam metal.

Albums by Pantera and Sepultura are credited with popularising 'a streetwise, death [metal]-derived groove metal that inspired an upcoming generation of mavens in the 1990s' (Christe 2003, p. 264).[129] Groove metal bands played slower but just as aggressively as thrash metal, writing riffs that were more varied rhythmically and relied more heavily on the groove of the drummer. Several bands have been ascribed the mantle of 'mainstream metal' in the early

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[129] Pantera, *Cowboys from Hell* (1990); Sepultura, *Chaos A.D.* (1993).

part of the twenty-first century. Bands like Machine Head, Avenged Sevenfold, Trivium, and Five Finger Death Punch utilise many tropes of metal music (distorted guitar, heavy drums, a mixture of clean and semi-distorted/overdriven vocals, metal iconography),[130] but do not have particularly strong affiliations with those genres under other umbrella terms (Cope 2010, p. 139). As a result, such artists are often grouped together primarily by their lack of specific generic association, as well as their commercial success, as in Wiederhorn and Turman's 'Millennial Metal' (2013, pp. 615-679).

Punk and Hardcore

As the name suggests, Punk and Hardcore includes those genres that developed out of punk rock and, later, hardcore. While links between metal and punk can be identified almost as far as one often traces the latter genre (Waksman 2009), certain genres of Punk and Hardcore are more commonly associated with metal in some way. Post-punk, grunge, and pop-punk are some of those genres that are generally omitted from discussions of metal history, despite recognisable instances of fraternisation, and are therefore absent here. Punk rock emerged in both the US and UK during the mid-to-late 1970s employing an aesthetic of amateurism articulated through simple compositions: up-tempo songs structured around two or three chords (often basic power chords) incorporating unconventional melodies, basic drumbeats, and vocals that were closer to speech or shouting than traditional pop singing (Laing 1985). A harder, more aggressive form of punk, hardcore punk, emerged during the early 1980s (Blush 2010). Drawing inspiration from punk rock, hardcore punk bands like Black Flag, Minutemen, and Circle Jerks composed music that was faster, less restrained, and with less of a pop influence than punk rock.

Agnostic Front, Negative Approach, and others eschewed singing in favour of shouting, using either slower tempos and riffs designed to accompany live crowds moshing and slamdancing (Ambrose 2001), as opposed to the pogoing favoured by punks, or sometimes faster tempos, reflecting the supposed

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[130] Machine Head, *Through the Ashes of Empires* (2003); Avenged Sevenfold, *City of Evil* (2005); Trivium, *The Crusade* (2006); Five Finger Death Punch, *War Is the Answer* (2009).

urgency of the artist's message.[131] Indeed, prominent hardcore band 'Minor Threat's sound was definitely quicker and harder than the Ramones, the Clash, and the Sex Pistols' and '[b]ecause they weren't fashionable nihilists, more and more bands across the country embraced the tag of "hardcore"' (Grubbs 2008, p. 14). During the mid-to-late 1980s, some bands began mixing elements of hardcore with parts of thrash metal to create a genre known as crossover (Waksman 2009). Carnivore, S.O.D., Cro-Mags and D.R.I. became well known for 'playing more intense hardcore that sounded like a stripped-down amateur take on speed metal' (Christe 2003, p. 173).[132] Crossover bands played hardcore with heavy distortion, riffs akin to thrash metal (sometimes simplified), and vocalists who moved between hardcore shouting and the overdriven vocals of metal. In the 1990s, metallic hardcore bands like Integrity, Earth Crisis, and (slightly later) Hatebreed played a heavier, generally slower hardcore that incorporated more breakdowns, distorted vocals, and metal guitar timbres.[133]

Extreme Metal

Composed primarily of four relatively concurrent genres – grindcore, black metal, death metal, and doom metal – Extreme Metal emerged during the 1980s sharing a 'musical radicalism that marks them out as different from other forms of heavy metal' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 5). In general, Extreme Metal bands tend toward fast tempos, heavily distorted guitar tones, distorted vocals ranging from growls to screams, and 'dark' lyrical themes (pp. 2-4). Doom metal, however, is characterised by slow, lurching tempos, sludge-like distortion, and occult imagery that 'was virtually the dominating theme' (Granholm 2013, p. 14) of the genre.[134] Usually positioned at the other end of the tempo spectrum, 'death metal and grindcore's models of blast beats,

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[131] 'Moshing is a combination of three main factors. Crowd surfing, stage diving, and the slam dancing of the original punks taken to a new level of violence' (Ambrose 2001, pp. 2-3). 'Evolved out of pogoing first found in English [punk] audiences, […] so-called slamming/slamdancing was a natural movement to the beat' (Grubbs 2008, p. 14).

[132] Carnivore, *Carnivore* (1985); S.O.D., *Speak English or Die* (1985); Cro-Mags, *The Age of Quarrel* (1986); D.R.I., *Crossover* (1987).

[133] Integrity, *Systems Overload* (1995); Earth Crisis, *Destroy the Machines* (1995); Hatebreed, *Satisfaction is the Death of Desire* (1997).

[134] Candlemass, *Epicus Doomicus Metallicus* (1986); Saint Vitus, *Born Too Late* (1986); Pentagram, *Day of Reckoning* (1987).

guttural growls and detuned guitar riffs' (Mudrian 2004, p. 245) mark them as Extreme Metal genres. Notions of speed are especially prevalent in grindcore,[135] with compositions, sometimes less than a minute long, essentially comprising alternating riff sections (rather than a verse-chorus structure) over blast-beats, with vocalists frequently utilising coarse screams and, during the late 1980s, low growls.[136] Possessed and Death, joined slightly later by the likes of Autopsy and Morbid Angel,[137] played nearly as fast as the grindcore bands but focused on more complex compositions, a heightened technical proficiency, and increasingly low growls (Purcell 2003, pp. 9-14). Black metal, 'typified by the use of screeched vocals, blast-beats, dissonances, the use of the "Devil's Interval", and disturbing/elitist lyrical content and imagery' (Spracklen 2014, p. 184), first appeared during the early-to-mid 1980s with bands like Celtic Frost and Bathory borrowing from the band who gave the genre its name, Venom.[138] The 'so-called "second wave" of black metal' (Spracklen 2014, p. 185) developed out of Scandinavia in the early 1990s and is often associated with bands like Darkthrone, Immortal, Emperor, and Mayhem.[139] These Norwegian artists are specifically associated with low fidelity recordings, stage costumes featuring black leather and spikes, and popularising 'corpsepaint' (Moynihan & Søderlind, p. 36).[140] Kahn-Harris (2007, p. 3) and Phillipov (2012, p. 76) both note the alleged unintelligibility of death metal lyrics, though this 'deprioritization of lyrics and the communicative function of the voice' (p. 80) may go some way to explaining the esoteric nature of 'Death Metal English' (D. Moore 2013a).

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[135] Extreme Noise Terror guitarist Pete Hurley recalls that the 'scene in the UK at that point [in 1985] was saturated with bands that just wanted to play mindlessly—as fast as was humanly possible' (in Mudrian 2004, pp. 30-31).

[136] Napalm Death, *Scum* (1987); Terrorizer, *World Downfall* (1989); Assück, *Anticapital* (1991).

[137] Possessed, *Seven Churches* (1985); Death, *Scream Bloody Gore* (1987); Autopsy, *Severed Survival* (1989); Morbid Angel, *Altars of Madness* (1989).

[138] Celtic Frost, *To Mega Therion* (1985); Bathory, *Under the Sign of the Black Mark* (1987); Venom, *Black Metal* (1982).

[139] Darkthrone, *A Blaze in the Northern Sky* (1992); Immortal, *Pure Holocaust* (1993); Emperor, *In the Nightside Eclipse* (1994); Mayhem, *De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas* (1994).

[140] Mayhem guitarist Øystein 'Euronymous' Aarseth 'would adopt the concept of wearing "corpsepaint" during concerts and in band photos—stylized black-and-white makeup which created a gruesome, macabre appearance and become one of the trademarks of Norwegian Black Metal' (Moynihan & Søderlind 1998, p. 36).

Hybrid Genres

Less specific than the umbrella terms explored above, Hybrid Genres consciously hybridise elements of multiple genres and/or position centrally the notion of hybridisation. In other words, artists working in these genres attempt to mix various genre tropes, rather than adhering to the traits of a single genre. Given their proclivity for fusing aspects of various genres, Hybrid Genres are particularly difficult to elucidate in brief, not least because the umbrella can easily become a catch-all for those genres linked to metal/hardcore in some way but without convincing ties to a single other umbrella. That said, it is possible to outline some of those Hybrid Genre most visible in metal/hardcore discourse.

Nu metal bands like Korn, Limp Bizkit, and Deftones blend compositional devices from hip-hop and metal, composing mid-tempo songs that alternate heavy chorus riffs with syncopated verses, sometimes including high-pitched discordant melodies.[141] Coming to prominence during the early twenty-first century, the closely related genres of metalcore, deathcore, and mathcore all juxtapose influences from multiple metal/hardcore genres.[142] During a period commonly known as the New Wave of American Heavy Metal (Sharpe-Young 2005), metalcore composition frequently employed standard song form, contrasting distorted vocals in verses with clean vocals in choruses,[143] making extensive use of breakdowns, and the occasional guitar solo (Andrew 2015).[144] Developing slightly later, deathcore mixes the growls, screams, diminished scales, and tremolo-picking of death metal, with the verse-chorus form and breakdowns of hardcore/metalcore (Sergeant D 2011a; R. Williams 2016).[145] As part of an older and less precise genre, mathcore bands write complex, frequently erratic music that often uses non-standard song form, irregular time

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[141] Korn, *Korn* (1994); Limp Bizkit, *Significant Other* (1999); Deftones, *White Pony* (2000).

[142] Reconciling competing notions of what constitutes metalcore is the focus of chapter six.

[143] Sometimes known, somewhat disparagingly, as 'good cop/bad cop' (O'Hagar 2010; Rosenberg 2012b), where 'good cop' refers to clean vocals, and 'bad cop' to distorted.

[144] Killswitch Engage, *The End of Heartache* (2004); Shadows Fall, *The War Within* (2004); As I Lay Dying, *Shadows are Security* (2005); All That Remains, *The Fall of Ideals* (2006).

[145] Suicide Silence, *The Cleansing* (2007); Whitechapel, *This is Exile* (2008); Carnifex, *Hell Chose Me* (2010); Thy Art is Murder, *Hate* (2012).

signatures, a variety of vocal styles, and sudden, jarring shifts between sections (Rhys 2012).[146]

Subgenre Connections

As has become evident throughout this chapter, the dynamic relationship between small-scale technical elements of metal/hardcore composition and performance, not to mention production, are often understood as signifying specific large-scale notions of genre. Conversely, specific genre or subgenre labels connote the variety of compositional and performance-related elements a listener should expect from a given recording or performance. The inclusion of a breakdown in a song that would otherwise be categorised as death metal might not automatically change that song's classification to deathcore, for instance, but the almost synonymous relationship between breakdowns and 'core' genres is such that perceived overuse of breakdowns would likely result in this song being classified as not 'proper' death metal, if not properly deathcore. Indeed, while metal genres are often in general groupings – e.g. (classic) heavy metal, extreme metal – or broad genre labels – e.g. black metal, death metal, hardcore – subtle differences between artists in the same genre may lead to re-categorisation as relatively specific subgenres.

Death metal, for instance, has been subdivided to incorporate melodic death metal (Hardt 2015), technical death metal (Heavy Blog 2015a), old-school death metal (Sergeant D 2014a), slam (Handmaker & Wilmot 2015), deathcore (R. Williams 2016), and deathgrind (J. Bennett 2009c). Deathcore itself has been further sub-categorised to include sludgewave (Handmaker 2015b) and progressive deathcore (2015b). Prefixes like 'technical', 'progressive', and 'melodic' are also used when referring to subgenres of metalcore and hardcore,[147] while 'old school' and 'neo' have been applied to thrash metal, and 'symphonic' or 'post' regularly accompany black metal. Following this tradition, goregrind utilises human autopsy-inspired imagery drawn from Carcass's *Reek*

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[146] The Dillinger Escape Plan, *Calculating Infinity* (1999); Botch, *We Are the Romans* (1999); The Number Twelve Looks Like You, *Nuclear. Sad. Nuclear.* (2005); Psyopus, *Our Puzzling Encounters Considered* (2007).

[147] E.g. progressive metalcore (Heavy Blog 2014) and melodic hardcore (Kraus 2014).

of Putrefaction (1988), and electro- or cybergrind integrates electronics, specifically including digital drum machines rather than physical drummers, into the wider genre of grindcore.[148] Despite the seemingly arbitrary subgenre qualifiers, each has come to denote a relatively specific meaning in metal/hardcore discourse.

Technical death metal (sometimes shortened to tech death), generally refers to death metal bands that play at faster tempos than regular death metal, and make heavier use of techniques like sweep-picking and blast-beats,[149] while melodic death metal is used to describe death metal bands that play at a slower pace, utilising melodies closer to those found in NWOBHM than in standard death metal.[150] However, a subgenre prefix like 'technical' is not only descriptive, but also prescriptive; that is, in order to be deemed technical death metal, a band must adhere to the unwritten rules of that subgenre by consciously displaying their technical ability at the forefront of their music. Inherent constraints within technical subgenres were evidenced when technical death metal band Rings of Saturn were accused of recording parts of *Dingir* (2013) at half-tempo, before speeding them up digitally (Neilstein 2012a). Regardless of their veracity, claims that the band had digitally manipulated their recordings in a presumed bid to sound more technically advanced harmed the artist's credibility with some participants due to the nature of the subgenre. Rings of Saturn guitarist Lucas Mann is 'part of a technical metal band; he's part of a scene which is supposed to value musicianship' (Rosenberg 2013), and since his 'is a band that sells itself on dizzying technicality, breakneck speed and little else. If those two traits are proven inauthentic, nothing is left' (Sanders 2013), thus the specific connotation of 'technical' is connected directly to the way in which the composition and performance of this music is judged. Tellingly, Sanders notes that if 'the same accusation [was] leveled against Cannibal Corpse, whose chief aim is brutality rather than technicality.

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[148] Last Days of Humanity, *Putrefaction in Progress* (2006); Genghis Tron, *Dead Mountain Mouth* (2006); Agoraphobic Nosebleed, *Agorapocalypse* (2009).

[149] Cryptopsy, *None So Vile* (1996); Gorguts, *Obscura* (1998); Necrophagist, *Epitaph* (2004).

[150] Carcass, *Heartwork* (1993); At the Gates, *Slaughter of the Soul* (1995); The Black Dahlia Murder, *Miasma* (2005).

Doubtless the same outrage would ensue, but in this case, it wouldn't be warranted' (2013), since Cannibal Corpse are *not* a technical death metal band.

When prefixing genres like deathcore, metalcore, or, simply, metal, 'progressive' connotes relatively specific small-scale details: the use of keyboards and/or clean vocals, less reliance on verse-chorus song form, deliberate incorporation of non-metal/hardcore genres, and a propensity for concept albums.[151] In short, the progressive prefix suggests that the band in question are drawing influence from the lineage of progressive rock, albeit remaining within the boundaries of their particular genre. Progressive metalcore might include '[s]ampling, peculiar structures or the introduction of unexpected genres (like jazz for example) [that] seek to modify the basic metalcore formula' (Heavy Blog 2014), clearly combining elements of progressive rock without compromising too many elements deemed fundamental to metalcore. While technical subgenres might be understood to focus explicitly on a particular aspect (or aspects) of the genre's normal make-up, progressive subgenres largely connote the incorporation of elements from outside the genre's normal boundaries.

This dichotomy accounts for other common subgenres denoted through prefix: symphonic black metal introduces new elements into black metal by combining keyboards (regularly utilising orchestral string patches) and a more polished production style with standard black metal genre traits (Street-Jammer 2016), and a symphonic death metal band like Septicflesh introduce similar elements into death metal utilising a full orchestra (as on *Titan*, 2014). By contrast, both 'neo' and 'old school' bands aim to uphold older genre standards, largely eschewing overt stylistic changes that have occurred since the genre first became popular. While 'neo' usually refers to bands forming since a genre's supposed heyday – e.g. neo thrash bands emphasising aspects of thrash metal that have lost their prominence since the 1980s, removing breakdowns from the contemporary palette and focusing on guitar solos and riffs to incite

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[151] The Faceless, *Akeldama* (2006); Misery Signals, *Controller* (2008); The Contortionist, *Exoplanet* (2010).

headbanging[152] – most 'old school' bands have continued to make music in a certain genre past its initial period of popularity and have avoided straying too far from the original incarnation of that genre (e.g. Testament and Exodus).

Given the additional level of specificity entailed by subgenre qualifiers, it is unsurprising that some artists or albums become difficult to accurately classify. Some commentators decide, therefore, to avoid placing such artists in a subgenre at all, while others simply stack multiple qualifiers; thus, Simon Handmaker describes Rivers of Nihil as 'technical progressive blackened death metal juggernauts' (in Heavy Blog 2015b). This positioning of Rivers of Nihil suggests a very specific oeuvre that does not fit neatly into any one subgenre of death metal, but neither is it captured by the more general title of death metal. In combining three subgenre qualifiers, Handmaker attempts to marry the descriptive and prescriptive aspects of subgenre titles, describing the amalgam of different subgeneric traits on the one hand, while also implying the flexibility with which the artist uses these traits to avoid prescription. It is worth noting here that although members of Rivers of Nihil do not necessarily identify with such a specific subgenre title – 'At the end of the day, we are a death metal band. We may have some technical stuff going on, but it's never tech for the sake of tech' (former Rivers of Nihil guitarist Jon Kunz in Stewart-Panko 2014, p. 22) – both generic label (death metal) and subgeneric qualifier (technical) are clearly known to the band. Kunz is aware that some may refer to his band as technical death metal, or some variant thereof, but his assertion that any 'technical' elements the band employ are not done so in order to be considered a technical death metal suggests that he understands the subgenre as prescriptive.

The multitude of subgenre titles and the frequency with which they are coined has led some bloggers to write deliberately tongue-in-cheek investigations into subgenres in various forms of popular music (Doran 2012), grading metal/hardcore subgenres in an attempt to find the 'best' (Sergeant D 2014a),

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[152] Municipal Waste, *The Art of Partying* (2007); Sylosis, *Monolith* (2012); Toxic Holocaust, *Chemistry of Consciousness* (2013).

or even posit new, highly specific subgenre titles like 'Brutal Tough Guy Slam' (Baker 2015) and 'Incoherent Gurgle-Grind' (Baker 2016). The point of these articles, of course, is to highlight the seemingly relentless drive for metal/hardcore participants to create new terms for music, positing the ludicrous endpoint of continuing to narrow subgeneric definitions. However, those subgenres coined through the addition of prefixes or suffixes are rarely so limited that they are of no use. Rather, metal/hardcore subgenres are regularly described in terminology that (1) positions the subgenre in relation to other genres and subgenres, and (2) carries relatively specific connotations regarding the technical construction of the subgenre. In this way, metal/hardcore subgenres often bridge the gap between the general generic milieu (by signposting the subgenre's location in a generic landscape) and the small-scale technical details that serve as foundational elements of metal/hardcore music. Here, the apparently incessant need to analyse and compartmentalise among some metal/hardcore participants is cast not as the pretentions of self-styled connoisseurs, but as an attempt to address the increasingly diverse and heterogeneous metal/hardcore music culture.

Whereas in the twentieth century it may have been sufficient to describe many different bands as simply 'metal' to most people (metal fan or not), the omnivorous nature of consumption and participation in metal's third wave (Weinstein 2015) engenders more specificity and an increasingly technical vocabulary.

Conclusion

While genre and subgenre appellations may be arbitrary when first coined, connotations developed through discourse and usage by metal/hardcore participants engender strong links between the name of a genre and what that genre is understood to comprise. Moreover, the dynamic relationship between varying strata of definition – between small-scale technical terminology and large-scale generic boundaries – allows metal/hardcore participants a highly-detailed conception of what distinguishes one (sub)genre from another. The ubiquity of genre nomenclature and persistent discussions of what qualifies a

certain artist or recording as one genre or another, or, indeed, the very existence of one genre or another, in metal/hardcore discourse (this thesis included), enculturates participants into the *process* of categorisation. This practice allows metal/hardcore participants to account for the relative diversity of musics labelled metal and hardcore: '[t]he term "heavy metal" became an open site of contestation […] a genre name that seemed no longer able to contain disparate musical styles and agendas' (Walser 1993, p. 3).

This chapter explored the substance of genre interrelation in metal/hardcore. The dynamic relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena is the primary mechanism by which myriad metal/hardcore genres are interconnected. A single compositional device may connote various genres depending on the way it is framed, blurring distinctions between individual genres and reinforcing the adaptability of metal/hardcore genre constructs. Convoluted intersections are demonstrated through a typology that reflects the largely artificial division of genres within metal/hardcore discourse. This partitioning of genres (especially into the four umbrella terms I outline) allows participants to ascribe a variety of interpretations and associations to broadly similar or even shared stylistic traits. Subgenre qualifiers affixed to extant genres allow participants to describe or prescribe specific constellations of styles drawn from multiple genres and/or an explicit focus on certain characteristics of the genre in question. This conceptual framework, wherein something as ostensibly trivial as guitar tuning may be associated with the more clearly significant notion of genre, is key to understanding ways by which participants engage with genre. Participants may adapt genre constructs through the strategic manipulation of the dynamic relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena.

Chapter Four – Genre, Style, Scene

Throughout this thesis I have utilised the terms genre and, to a lesser extent, style and scene, without providing a detailed explanation of what I mean past citing other authors on genre and noting my ambivalence toward their definitions. A primary reason for postponing such a discussion was an assumption that readers would be more familiar with genre than with wider metal/hardcore discourses, hence an attempt to provide the reader with a level of understanding to critique both. Similarly, the significance of genre, style, and scene to metal/hardcore discourse may be difficult to appreciate without a working knowledge of the multifarious ways in which these notions are applied among metal/hardcore participants. The present chapter, then, is designed to explicate a conception of genre, style, and scene reflective of ways in which metal/hardcore participants utilise these notions and, in that sense, conceptions conducive to the study of metal/hardcore music. As before, such notions are neither unique nor confined to metal/hardcore music culture, despite the claims of some commentators, but the prevalence and apparent mutual understanding of these ideas in metal/hardcore discourse offers a particularly fruitful site to investigate their functions. Indeed, this ambivalence toward defining to what 'the extreme metal scene' might refer does not suggest that participants disregard clarity; rather it is a reflection of the amorphous nature of what might be taken to constitute such a scene.

Of particular interest is the tendency among metal/hardcore participants to use terms like genre, style, and scene somewhat interchangeably, and, of equal significance, the widespread use of similar language in academic writing on metal. My intention here is not to provide clean, simple, fixed definitions of the three terms under discussion, but to analyse how these ideas function alongside one another (both with and against each other) in twenty-first century metal and hardcore.

This chapter is separated into three sections each comprising discussion of the titular terms genre, style, and scene. Given the interconnected and relative nature of these concepts, there are elements of difficulty and futility in dividing

them artificially, and cross-fertilisation between the three sections is inevitable. Each section details theoretical debate of the concept in question, as well as usage within metal studies and general metal discourse. The basis of much discussion of genre in metal studies is provided by theories drawn primarily from popular music studies, especially those of Franco Fabbri (1982a) and Simon Frith (1996), which are developed in relation to metal music by, among others, Walser (1993) and Kahn-Harris (2007). Issues of style, particularly as it is distinct or distinguished from genre, proposed by Moore (2001a, 2012), are explored alongside usages of style as genre (and vice versa), as synecdoche (Tagg 2013), and as tokening a genre type (Dodd 2007). Finally, scene is investigated in an attempt to account for the variety of uses to which it is put in popular music and metal/hardcore academic scholarship, as well as in popular discourse. Observing potential contradictions in the type and focus of various scenes, I consider how scenes may be understood as rhizomes (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). During the course of the chapter I characterise each term in such a way that incorporates their various uses in metal/hardcore discourse. In so doing, this chapter provides a theoretical underpinning for chapters five and six, in which notions of genre, style, and scene are significantly intertwined.

Genre

Genre is a ubiquitous presence within metal/hardcore music culture. Indeed, discussions including genre terms are endemic in discourse on popular music more generally, both within and without academia. Musicologists have proffered insight into the ontology of genres in popular music (Fabbri 1982a; Frith 1996; Shuker 2008), the position of genre in the music industry (Negus 1999), and the process of genre formation (Lena & Peterson 2008; Lena 2012). Issues of genre appear regularly in metal and hardcore scholarship, with authors often keen to emphasise the flexibility of genre (Walser 1993), the significance of non-sonic elements in conceptualising genre (Weinstein 1991, 2000), and the potential incompatibility between traditional models of genre and some forms of metal (Kahn-Harris 2007; Smialek 2008, 2015). As shown in chapter two, genre features prominently in the historiography of metal and hardcore (e.g. Dunn 2005, 2012), being used to delineate various eras of the

music culture (Christe 2003; Wiederhorn & Turman 2013), and/or as a categorising apparatus (Sharpe-Young 2007). The particularly versatile nature of genre terms in popular metal/hardcore discourse may be the result of many critics concerned less with theorising genres than with applying genre terms in a direct fashion less common in academic writing. However, websites like *Heavy Blog is Heavy*, *Death Metal Underground*, and *Metal Sucks* publish articles discussing the nature of metal/hardcore genres alongside posts employing genre terms in a more categorical capacity (enabling a reader to find similar content, for instance).

Genre in Popular Music

The importance of devising theoretical models of genre in popular music studies has been argued since the early 1980s (see Fabbri 1982a, 1982b; Tagg 1982). During the 1980s, musicologists like Fabbri, Philip Tagg, and Richard Middleton developed models of genre for use with, though not limited to, popular music. Drawn from treatises on genre in critical theory, philosophy, and literary theory, early scholars of genre in popular music studies were regularly at pains to observe connections between sonic and non-sonic phenomena. Indeed, of Fabbri's five 'types of generic rules' (1982a, p. 54), only the first refers to sonic phenomena exclusively, and Tagg's model for analysing popular music (1982) emphasises the semiotic function of (musical) sound. Following these works, musicologists researching popular music have advanced fresh approaches to genre, including Frith (1996), Keith Negus (1999), Charles Hamm (2000), Moore (2001a, 2001b, 2012), David Brackett (2002, 2016), Fabian Holt (2007), Roy Shuker (2008), and Jennifer C. Lena (2012). Rather than detail the minutiae of each of these texts, I outline key differences and similarities to proffer a general framework for approaching genre in studies of popular music. Though genre definitions contained in these texts are rarely if ever intended to be exhaustive, it is useful to place them beside one another to build a broad understanding of what genre means in popular musicology. Fabbri's 'generic rules' (1982a) and Shuker's 'distinguishing dimensions of popular music genres' (2005, p. 121) offer the clearest example of specific

genre parameters, and thus form the basis of a comparative analysis alongside Frith's uses for genre labels (1996) toward the end of this first section.

Surveying texts on genre in popular music uncovers widespread disagreement among scholars on what genres are, to what genres might refer, and how genres are used (not to mention *who* it is that uses genres). Among the earliest of these works, Fabbri's claim that a musical genre is 'a set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules' (1982a, p. 52) makes explicit a perspective of musical genre inclusive of 'extra-musical' (that is, non-sonic) concerns.[153] In this formulation, the salient elements of a musical genre are clear: genre refers to a sonic artefact viewed in relation to non-sonic phenomena. Contrast this definition with Shuker's: '"Genre" can be basically defined as a category or type. […] The various encyclopedias, the standard histories, and critical analyses of popular music use genre as a central organizing element' (2008, p. 119). Here, genre denotes a non-sonic construct applied to the musical artefact, presumably post hoc, thereby inverting the relationship Fabbri describes. In other words, the former definition of genre attends to qualities *of* the music, while the latter description ascribes attributes *to* the music. Frith suggests this plural characteristic of genre when he observes that '[g]enre is a way of defining music in its market or, alternatively, the market in its music' (1996, p. 76). For Frith, genre can be applied justifiably to either 'the market', as a categorising tool for the music industry, or to 'the music', as a tool of identification for fans of the music. Indeed, a unifying factor among scholars working on popular music genre is the recognition that 'genres in pop are exceptionally fluid and polyvalent' (Middleton 2000, p. 232). This fluidity, as I have suggested earlier in the thesis, is both a defining factor of genre in popular music (and, therefore, in metal/hardcore) and a fundamental element of the creative apparatus genre offers to multiple types of participants in any given music culture.

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[153] This widely-cited quote from Fabbri first appeared in print in a slightly different form: 'A musical genre is a set of musical events, real or possible, whose course is regulated by a definite arrangement of socially accepted rules' (Fabbri 1982b, p. 136).

Some authors on popular music genre have emphasised the role of the music industry in delineating various genres (Negus 1999), or the elision between communities and music industry in the process of genre formation (Lena & Peterson 2008; Lena 2012).[154] Hamm outlines the significance of performance in shaping how we distinguish one genre from another and, indeed, the ability to change the genre of a given piece in the act of performance: '[f]lexibility of genre in popular music extends beyond the fact that a given piece can belong to two or more genres or fall somewhere between several of them: genre can also change from performance to performance' (Hamm 2000, p. 306). Again, the plural nature of genre emerges from Hamm's prose. On the one hand, 'a given piece can belong to two or more genres', suggesting that genre is a category under which musical works be placed, while on the other hand 'genre can also change from performance to performance' implying that categorisation can be affected by the performance of a work.[155] Although genre classification may seem to take place apart from the music being classified, the performance of that music has a direct bearing on its classification. This distinction hints at retrieving the active role music played in genre classification proffered by Fabbri. Hamm's example employs a separation of composer/composition and performer/performance, such that the songs of Irving Berlin (his example) might be described as a certain genre, but their performance by a given singer includes traits of a different genre. Although this relationship is less prevalent in metal and hardcore (in which the composer and performer are either the same person or members of the same band) and in more recent popular music (wherein the performer of a track is assumed composer even if that is not the case), Hamm's observation indicates the dynamic relationship between various elements contributing to genre classification.

Since 'genres are not defined by characteristics of musical style alone but also by performance rituals, visual appearance, the types of social and ideological connotations associated with them, and their relationships to the material

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[154] Brown (2015) has previously discussed the work of Lena and Peterson (2008) in relation to metal music.

[155] Hamm's observation that 'genre can also change from performance to performance' may be more readily applied to our study if we replace 'performance' with 'recording' or 'track'.

conditions of production' (Brackett 2002, p. 67), any attempt to discern a specific arrangement of these elements must be understood in its limited capacity. A synchronic view of a given genre may produce a list of generic traits that could form a category, but this fixity must be recognised as artificial since genres are subject to continual change. Moreover, because textual elements can be shared between two or more different genres, ascribing a sort of hierarchy to those traits may be the only method by which one can claim a given text to a (single) given genre. Along with his 'generic rules' (discussed below), Fabbri notes that 'the existence could also be claimed of a sort of "hyper-rule" which establishes [such a] hierarchy; to this hyper-rule we can easily attribute the name of "ideology" of that genre' (1982a, p. 55). Thus, a genre-dependent ideology determines the significance of each feature comprising a genre such that potential listeners, as well as extant participants, know (or learn) how the genre 'should' be appreciated.[156]

Genre Worlds, Genre Cultures, and Metagenres

In order to differentiate their notions of genre from those in common usage in non-academic discourse, some scholars have taken to coining specific terminology. Frith introduces 'genre world[s]' that are 'first constructed and then articulated through a complex interplay of musicians, listeners, and mediating ideologues' (1996, p. 88). These genre worlds serve as the space (physical and abstract) in which a new genre may form and operate prior and separate to 'the marketing process that follows, as the wider industry begins to make sense of the new sounds and markets and to exploit both genre worlds and genre discourses in the orderly routines of mass marketing' (p. 88).[157] Crucially, genre worlds encompass actors in various roles (musicians, fans, journalists, and deejays) engaged with one another, as opposed to simply a group of musicians 'creating' something new. Frith highlights the social dimension of (music) genres, deliberately moving the discussion of genre as something supposedly

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[156] Competing genre ideologies are discussed further in chapter five.

[157] The notion of a genre existing prior to music industry intervention aligns with the avant-garde and, to a lesser extent, scene-based stages of Lena and Peterson's (2008) AgSIT (Avant-garde, scene-based, industry-based, traditionalist) model of genre trajectories (further expanded in Lena, 2012).

intrinsic ('in the music') or abstract to the experiential realm of societal interaction. His genre worlds privilege the social or 'extra-musical' aspect of music genres by ascribing the power of mediation to ideologues who are patently not musicians or (regular) fans. Frith's 'mediating ideologues' are journalists, professional critics or amateur authors of fanzines, as well as radio or club deejays, the former group most conspicuous in genre appellation while the latter may be particularly adept at genre identification.[158] Although genre worlds are clearly dependent upon different musicians composing, performing, and recording music that one might deem similar in some significant way, as well as upon listeners suitably interested in this type of music to support it emotionally or monetarily, for a genre world to be recognised as such requires the specialised expertise of journalists and deejays to bring together potentially disparate groups of musicians and listeners physically and ideologically.

Negus employs the term 'genre culture', 'drawing on Steve Neale's [1980] use of genre as a sociological rather than formal concept' (Negus 1999, p. 28), to highlight those aspects of genre often ignored as outside the artistic realm. Expanding Frith's genre worlds, Negus conceptualises 'genre cultures as arising from the complex intersection and interplay between commercial organizational structures and promotional labels; the activities of fans, listeners and audiences; networks of musicians; and historical legacies that come to us within broader social formations' (Negus 1999, pp. 29-30). Negus proffers a significantly broader framework for understanding genre, encompassing various elements of the music industry as well as those actors involved in genre worlds. The differentiation of elements of the music industry alongside a recognition of wider social processes situates Negus's genre cultures within, rather than apart from, participants' everyday lives.

Here, 'the music industry' becomes a contributing element to the identity (if it can be so called) of a genre like any other. Acknowledging the varied aspects

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[158] Though I do not have the space to investigate it properly here, updating and expanding Frith's 'mediating ideologues' to include the algorithms of online search engines and, in particular, music streaming services might be a fruitful avenue for future research. For recent publications in this area see David Beer (2013).

of the industry does not risk the artistic credibility of a given genre (Frith's model plays upon the traditional art vs. commerce dialectic); if anything, the industry provides a vehicle for discussion and ascription of those kinds of value judgements. Within Frith's three groups of contributors to genre worlds we find actors interacting with 'the industry' in varying capacities. Musicians, probably the most obviously artistic entities Frith includes, rely upon technology in composition, performance, and recording, as well as distribution networks at the very least, if not also relying on record labels for supporting, financing, and marketing their music. By purchasing concert tickets, CDs, or merchandise, listeners are engaging in commercial activity, not to mention the potential additional revenue generated through individual, self-driven word of mouth recommendations. Professional critics make a living writing for publications often owned by multinational corporations and are likely swayed by the incessant overtures of record labels to review certain releases before others or position them more prominently. Even amateur fanzine authors are involved in the processes necessary in transforming personal writing to a publication disseminated nationwide or further afield.

Given that all of these actors interact with the music industry in one way or another, it seems odd that Frith fails to acknowledge that the industry is not something that happens *after* a genre has been formed, but is in fact a central part of genre construction much like his categories of musicians, listeners and mediating ideologues.[159] Moreover, it is misguided to deny the mediating power of studio personnel and record labels (Hennion 1989). Regardless of the level of participation in composition, performance, and recording implied by terms like studio engineer, mixer, or producer, those involved in the recording process have a direct and substantial role in creating the recorded artefact so central to understandings of popular music (Martin 2014). Likewise, in signing certain artists and dismissing others the mediating capacity of record label A&R divisions is obvious, especially when some 'A&R staff are frequently involved in all aspects of an artist's relationship with the record company' (Shuker 2005,

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[159] The presence of the music industry can even be identified in Lena and Peterson's avant-garde genres that 'form around members' dislike of some aspect of the music of the day and the quest for music that is different' (2008, p. 701).

p. 3).[160] In this way, industry forces are a direct part of genre construction and maintenance at every stage, rather than the outside force imposed on Frith's genre worlds after the world has formed.

Given his explicit focus on 'highlighting how the music industry shapes the possibilities for creative practice and how this intersects with broader historical, social and cultural processes' (Negus 1999, p. 29), it is unsurprising to see Negus claim to be 'thinking about "genre cultures" as involving far more than aesthetic debates within the "genre worlds" of musicians, fans and critics' (p. 29). Despite the somewhat confusing nomenclature, then, genre cultures subsume the aesthetic aspect of genre worlds within an expanded framework incorporating a dynamic relationship between those elements traditionally considered in opposition: artistic/creative vs. industry/business. In short, the scope of Negus's genre cultures is greater than that of Frith's genre worlds. The varying scope of genre constructions is a point of discussion for Shuker who suggests that '[i]t is useful to distinguish between metagenres, which are rather loose amalgams of various styles, overarching labels, notably rock, pop, and "world", and genres, which arguably exist in a purer, more easily understood and specified form (e.g. disco)' (2008, p. 120).

Differentiating between the relatively specific 'genre' and deliberately general 'metagenre', Shuker emphasises the overall lack of specificity in labelling terminology. While '[r]ock and pop […] provide examples of metagenres. Heavy metal shows a common pattern of genre differentiation, with a range of subgenres developing during the history of the form' (Shuker 2008, p. 119), thus promoting a diachronic view of metagenres. Put simply, though metagenres may not be more (or less) flexible than genres, their position 'above' genres means that rock, for instance, has been able to incorporate multiple genres as they have formed over time. Conversely, metagenre may be applied to the somewhat arbitrary way genres are grouped by listeners,

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[160] These aspects include 'the initial negotiations and the signing of the contract, the rehearsal, arrangement, and recording of songs, and liaising with the marketing, video production, and promotion divisions of the recording company' (Shuker 2005, p. 3).

musicians, marketers and so on.[161] The notion of 'world music' (Shuker 2005), a blatant example of a Western-centric music industry,[162] somehow adequately encompassing any and all music that is not easily categorised within the established Western genre typology (music that is not obviously classical, popular, or folk, say) suggests that those doing the labelling and, indeed, those for whom such labelling is useful, are less concerned with exacting detail. Of course, since '[t]he logic of labeling depends on what the label is for' (Frith 1996, p. 76), one cannot judge harshly or dismiss out of hand the apparently lackadaisical nature of metageneric classification.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the usefulness of differing focuses on the general and the specific is to recognise 'different *levels* of genre' (Brackett 2002, p. 68; original emphasis). Brackett's model distinguishes between labels used by different participants within the music industry: 'Marketing category', 'Chart name', 'Radio format', and 'Media-fan genres' (2002, p. 69). Broadly speaking, genres grouped within categories move from general monikers under the market category to more specific genre labels in media-fan genres. Brackett's point is two-fold: first, genre labels may be relatively arbitrary and transferrable in the sense that a media-fan genre like hip-hop may also be known as the marketing category 'Rhythm and blues (black popular music)' (p. 69), and, related, that individual songs and artists may be categories 'in contrasting but overlapping "genre worlds"' (2002, p. 78).

Rules, Dimensions, and Principles

Some of the authors discussed here provide specific frameworks for understanding musical genres that can be compared and critiqued to give a more robust model for what genres are and how they function. Fabbri (1982a) and Shuker (2008) each list five elements of genres that might be used as

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[161] Shuker does not make this point explicitly, but his relative (perhaps deliberate) lack of specificity regarding how one circumscribes a given metagenre allows for multiple conceptions of what genres might constitute rock or pop.

[162] For in-depth discussions of 'world music' as a construct of the Western music industry see Timothy D. Taylor (1997) and Frith (2000).

analytical parameters, while Frith (1996) observes three ways in which genres might be used.

Fabbri outlines five 'types of generic rules' (1982a, p. 54):

1) Formal and technical rules,
2) Semiotic rules,
3) Behavioral rules,
4) Social and ideological rules,
5) Commercial and juridical rules (Fabbri 1982a, pp. 55-59).

Shuker contends that 'a number of distinguishing dimensions of popular music genres can be identified' (2008, p. 121); his five dimensions can be summarised thus:

1) Historical roots, social and political context,
2) Stylistic ('musical') traits/characteristics,
3) Non-musical stylistic attributes (image, iconography),
4) Audience,
5) Durability and influence (Shuker 2008, p. 121).[163]

While there are broadly comparable categories in each list, differences in nomenclature and setting are significant. Fabbri's list was constructed and published at a time when the academic study of popular music as part of musicology was still in its infancy and part of his rationale for such research was surely to highlight the potential for more traditional musicological analytical frameworks, hence two of five of his rules (formal and technical, and semiotic) are devoted to traditionally 'musical' attributes.[164] That said, Fabbri also attempts to demonstrate the need for less traditional musicological methodology by including rules that were perhaps more in line with cultural studies or sociology at the time. By way of comparison, Shuker compiled his list partly in response to Fabbri (or, at least, after Fabbri and referencing him) and partly as a way of amalgamating subsequent works by authors post-Fabbri. In this sense it is unsurprising to observe Shuker include an entirely new category: durability and influence.

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[163] To this list, Shuker might have added technology, mentioned as significant in relation to so-called musical characteristics, but arguably an important factor in each of his five dimensions, if not significant enough to warrant its own entry.

[164] The paper from which Fabbri's chapter is derived was first presented at the inaugural conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, held in Amsterdam in June 1981.

There are, of course, roughly equivalent categories in each list. Fabbri's social and ideological rule is fairly close to Shuker's historical roots, social and political contexts, while Fabbri's behavioural rule is similar to Shuker's audience dimension. Fabbri's formal and technical rule alongside his semiotic rule might be compared most literally to Shuker's stylistic traits. The difference in categorical terminology may suggest that Shuker is less concerned with lyrical and discursive elements of music than Fabbri, but it is more likely that Fabbri was highlighting the need to study both formal and semiotic aspects of popular music equally – thanks to the work of authors like Fabbri, Tagg, and Middleton (among others), Shuker does not feel the need to make such a distinction.

While still comparable, Fabbri's behavioural rule would pertain to at least two of Shuker's dimensions: non-musical stylistic attributes and audience. Whereas Fabbri strives to highlight both the traditionally musicological aspects of popular music genres and the less traditional 'non-musical' aspects, Shuker, writing later, emphasises the diversity in these non-musical elements by separating issues of image and behaviour (albeit seemingly minimising the diversity of musical attributes in the process). Shuker's audience may also be linked to Fabbri's commercial and juridical rule in that Shuker's use of audience refers both to listeners and to consumers since they are one and the same (in an economic if not philosophical sense). These slippages between the lists are reflected in slippages between the categories themselves and neither author claims otherwise. Indeed, both Fabbri and Shuker provide these specific categories to give the reader a more detailed framework, while noting (or implying) a dynamic relationship between the categories in practice. The differing perspectives of each author are further emphasised when one observes a category unique to Shuker's dimensions: durability and influence. This category highlights a key distinction between the two lists of parameters. Fabbri's rules pertain to a given genre, albeit in relation to other genres and events outside that genre (social and ideological rule), whereas Shuker's dimensions address multiple genres simultaneously. Shuker deliberately approaches the concept of genre as situated among and alongside other genres, reflecting the ways in which participants encounter genres on an

everyday basis. This perspective is significant 'because musicians, producers, and consumers are already ensnared in a web of genre expectation' (Frith 1996, p. 94) whenever they encounter (popular) music. It is in this sense that Frith's uses of generic labels are best understood.

Frith describes three ways in which 'genre labels' (1996) might be used:

1) to organise the sales process,
2) to organise the playing process,
3) to organise the listening process (Frith 1996, pp. 75-88).

While Fabbri and Shuker detail how we might analyse what genres are, Frith is more concerned here with how they are used by participants. His primary thesis is that genres function by way of organising how music is sold, played, and experienced through listening. This is not necessarily to say that we can link each use to a specific participant (the industry to sales, musicians to performance, listeners to experience) primarily because distinguishing specific types of participation is not a useful way to analyse music or musical genres. Rather, each participant might use generic labels in all three of these ways in the process of engaging with music on a day-to-day basis.

From these authors, then, genres in popular music (and musical genres more generally) are comprised of various 'rules' (Fabbri 1982a) and 'distinguishing dimensions' (Shuker 2008), and may be used as an organising principle for engagement with music (Frith 1996). On the one hand, genres are born out of artistic expression, out of the labour of musicians, studio personnel, listeners, and fanzine writers, while on the other hand, genres are prefigured by commercial forces to better group artists, listeners, etc. into neatly defined markets for economic exploitation. However, a more accurate model recognises the dynamic relationship between these two factors such that they are frequently one and the same.[165] In effect, musical genres are both a category into which artists and recordings can be placed (by listeners or by major record labels) and an apparently organic set of boundaries arising from the practices and ideologies of those participating in the genre (again,

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[165] This kind of false dichotomy is explored further in chapter five.

regardless of participant). The process of creating and maintaining a genre is itself a creative and collective process on the part of all participants insofar as the efforts of all participants come to bear on the genre as the genre bears on all participation.[166]

Genre in Metal/Hardcore Academia

Genre is a significant issue in metal/hardcore music culture, and, as such, figures prominently in metal/hardcore academia. Despite a tendency to consider metal as apart from wider discussions of popular music, most metal/hardcore scholars rely upon genre theories developed in popular music studies (as I do). To this end, authors like Fabbri and Frith are cited frequently. That said, concepts of genre offered by Weinstein, Walser, Kahn-Harris, and Cope supplement less metal-focused frameworks. Walser (1993) is referenced widely in subsequent texts on genre in popular music, as well as in metal studies, while Shuker (2008) utilises metal as an example of generic heterogeneity.

Given his extensive research outside metal (particularly in popular music and jazz),[167] it is unsurprising that Walser's conception of genre in metal is roughly analogous to genre in any other popular music, demonstrated by his direct observation that '[n]owhere are genre boundaries more fluid than in popular music' (1993, p. 27). Walser promotes the 'analysis of the *music* of popular music' (p. 26; original emphasis), and while his work foregrounds analysis of sonic artefacts, these artefacts are not interpreted in isolation; '[t]he analytical notion of discourse enables us to pursue an integrated investigation of musical and social aspects of popular music' (p. 28). Thus, although Walser's focus is on analysing sonic artefacts of metal utilising methodology drawn from traditional musicology, in doing so he explores both musical and social elements of metal simultaneously. The idea of musical genres as discourse

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[166] This is not to say that all musical participants will *consciously* consider genre during all (or any) stages of their musical activity, but even subconsciously genre plays a significant role in all parts of musical activity (everything from the location of a rehearsal or concert, to the framing of such activity as a rehearsal, not band practice, and a concert, not a gig).

[167] Walser has published writing on polka (1992b), hip hop (1995), jazz (1999), and the analysis of popular music (2003).

emphasises the dynamic relationship between seemingly internal and external features of music culture,[168] not to mention those small- and large-scale phenomena discussed in chapter three. In a more literal sense, '[i]t is from the discourse about discourses that concepts of genre are formed, transformed, and defended' (p. 28). In other words, metal/hardcore participants engage with the genre by discussing with one another certain features of a given artefact (or artist, record label, venue, etc.) as metal or not, as part of the discourse of metal. In this way, '[g]enres then come to function as horizons of expectation (for readers) and as models of composition for authors (or musicians)' (p. 29).[169] While I do not disagree with Walser that genre can function in receptive and productive domains, his distinction between the two is overly rigid. Genres also function as 'horizons of expectation' for musicians and, indeed, as 'models of composition' for listeners, each participating in the *active* construction and maintenance of genre.

Echoing Walser (1993), Cope writes 'about heavy metal as *music*' (2010 p. 1; original emphasis), espousing a conception of genre based upon that of Fabbri (1982a), prioritising Fabbri's formal and technical rules. Cope employs traditional musicological methodology (motivic, harmonic, structural analyses) to argue for a clear distinction between hard rock, epitomised by Led Zeppelin, and heavy metal, typified by Black Sabbath. Following work by Middleton (1990) and Moore (2001b), Cope develops a 'musical syntax' of heavy metal constructing a 'set of codes based on musical elements' (2010, p. 3).[170] He utilises 'the core and periphery model, identifying and situating "key" codes that appear to be present in all forms of metal (the core) and the peripheral codes that become important in the formation of sub-genres; for example, the use of synthesisers in black metal and symphonic metal' (2010, p. 4).

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[168] Walser's consideration of genre as discourse is drawn from Tzvetan Todorov (1990), especially pp. 9-19.

[169] According to Moore, John Fiske (1987, pp. 110-116) 'argues that the function of genre is to create an expectation within an audience for the range of pleasures on offer by activating the memory of similar texts' (Moore 2001a, p. 438).

[170] Delineating metal codes is not a new practice: Weinstein asserts that heavy metal 'has a code, or set of rules, that allows one to objectively determine whether a song, an album, a band, or a performance should be classified as belonging to the category "heavy metal"' (2000, p. 6).

Although he self-consciously contradicts claims by Weinstein and Walser that Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath are both heavy metal (p. 4), Cope can nonetheless be read as continuing the work of these authors – like Walser, he privileges musical (sonic) phenomena while relating them to social (non-sonic) elements of genre, and, like Weinstein, he makes extensive use of codes.[171] Indeed, Cope's conception of genre is contingent on the identification of specific sonic codes such that one can recognise a piece of music as a certain genre by observing its codes and comparing them to a pre-established group of codes. By describing some codes as core and others as peripheral, an understanding of genre as syntax is not necessarily restrictive. Instead, one can differentiate between (heavy) metal as a genre and, for instance, death metal as a subgenre based upon the former's use of most (if not all) core musical codes, and the latter's mixture of some core and some peripheral codes. As with Weinstein (2000), Cope's perception of genre as a collection of specific codes, musical or otherwise, may be more accurately cast as a grouping of various *styles*. In other words, genre functions as a consolidation of style.

Cope's grouping of styles (codes) in the pursuit of defining genre is not arbitrary; rather, codes identified in the music of a particular artist are traced to their origin. It is in this way that Cope can declare Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath as existing within two different genres, since there is a divergence in the bands' stylistic lineages as a result of Black Sabbath's 'radical transgression of their blues roots' (2010, p. 70). From this initial transgression grew all later developments of metal, or, more accurately, Cope constructs a stylistic lineage from codes identified in more recent metal artefacts to those found in the recordings of Black Sabbath. Metal was only properly established as a genre during the 1980s, claims Cope, since it was then that artists developed Black Sabbath's core codes in such a way that 'the essential characteristic features remain intact and identifiable as heavy metal whilst at the same time the genre expands' (p. 95). This development of core codes has continued into the

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[171] Cope's emphasis on sonic codes differentiates his work from that of Weinstein who stresses that '[i]n in the case of heavy metal, the sonic, the visual, and the verbal dimensions all make crucial contributions to the definition of the genre' (2000, p. 7).

twenty-first century, and while it has been supplemented by various peripheral codes, Cope argues that ubiquitous compositional/performance-related elements of contemporary metal can be traced back to Black Sabbath. He offers technological developments as a primary agent of change in metal codes, an obvious example being the evolution of the blast-beat in conjunction with the double-kick pedal (pp. 99-103).[172] Cope's principle of a direct evolutionary line is maintained in his claim that 'the blast-beat is essentially a rapid back-beat rhythm' (p. 100). Since, by his understanding, the blast-beat is merely a faster version of the back-beat, and Black Sabbath employed back-beats, any iteration of a blast-beat is therefore connected to Black Sabbath and their core metal codes. Tellingly, there is no mention of grindcore in relation to blast-beats nor punk in relation to Motörhead, despite Cope's discussion of blast-beats occurring during a section on the band.[173] Cope's exclusion of non-metal influences is crucial to his claim that blast-beats are essentially back-beats and are therefore connected to Black Sabbath through a clear linear progression.

The significance of Cope's core and periphery model is that it seems to account for obvious differences between bands like Black Sabbath and System of a Down (one of Cope's examples). After identifying differences between Black Sabbath and New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands, he describes the latter as 'magnifying the angry performative styles initiated by Black Sabbath' (2010, p. 120). Inherent within the core/periphery model, then, is the ability for change: Cope establishes Black Sabbath's (musical) codes as core, then interprets aspects of NWOBHM as peripheral variants of those codes. By the 1990s (or, at least, the end of the twentieth-century) these newer codes had become less peripheral through common usage and were replaced by new codes established in, for instance, nu metal. This model affords both variation in what might be called metal and, ostensibly, a way to interpret new elements as metal so long as they can be traced back to the originators, Black Sabbath.

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[172] See Niall Thomas (2015) for an exploration of technological developments in relation to changing metal production practices and aesthetics. See Duncan Williams (2015) for a concise discussion of timbre in twenty-first century metal production.

[173] See chapter three for an explanation of blast-beats and their stylistic associations with punk and grindcore.

Perhaps the most striking issue with this conception of metal/hardcore genre is encountered when Cope admits that '[t]he roots of low tessitura death growls remain unclear but could be related to Black Sabbath's use of the "Iron Man" voice at the beginning of "Iron Man" ([*Paranoid*] 1970[b])' or even the voice of the possessed child "Regan" in the horror film *The Exorcist* (1973)' (2010, p. 133). These at best tenuous links between 'Sabbathian syntax' (p. 103) and growled vocals highlight a myopic view of metal genre as unconnected to other musics. Outside influence exists only in its capacity to be appropriated and assimilated into metal as a peripheral code. This is nevertheless more flexible than Weinstein's metal code that 'marks off a periphery at which heavy metal blends with other genres of rock music or develops offshoots of itself that *violate* parts of its code or develops new codes' (2000, p. 6; emphasis added).

Perhaps recognising these limitations, Cope suggests 'variable coding' as a 'way of explaining variations in the genre. Here, the emphasising and privileging of some devices or events over others refines the sonic fingerprint' (2010, p. 134).[174] So while a band like Machine Head 'represent the mainstream in metal because their sound is one that balances an even mix of the core syntactical devices that have come to identify the heavy metal genre' (p. 133), artists in other metal genres, subgenres, or microgenres may explore an unbalanced mix of core syntactical devices. Even omitting discussion of peripheral codes, then, some of metal/hardcore's variety may be accounted for by observing differences in priorities among multiple genres. Variable coding is thus reminiscent of Fabbri's 'hyper-rule' that establishes a genre's internal hierarchy of rules (1982a) in that one may be able to differentiate between two or more genres based upon their apparent privileging of some elements over others. Fabbri's genre-dependent ideology can be used to reorder his generic rules, only one of which is explicitly sonic, but Cope's variable coding affords another level of variation by suggesting that hierarchies may exist within, in this instance, a genre's sonic syntax. Fabbri observes that some genres seem to ascribe more importance to visual elements than to sonic, for example, but

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[174] Cope draws this term from Middleton's discussion of musical codes (1990, pp. 172-183).

Cope recognises that within the sonic and visual categories certain devices are privileged over others. In this way, differentiating genres may involve not only identifying a hierarchy between, say, sonic, visual, and discursive elements, but also discerning a system of organisation within those groupings. Sonic differences between metalcore and deathcore, for instance, are less pronounced than between grindcore and heavy metal, since the two former genres share many compositional devices. However, ways in which these devices are employed – frequency, function, position in a song, for example – alongside other devices provide points of departure between deathcore and metalcore. Cope suggests that bands 'emphasise certain [core and peripheral] devices and play down others in the creation of sub-genre' thereby enacting variation within the genre while 'the dominant sound remains that of metal due to the dominant presence of the key, core codes' (2010, p. 134).

Moving away from the focus on (metal/hardcore) sonic phenomena evident in the work of musicologists like Cope (2010) and Lilja (2009), Kahn-Harris suggests 'approaching extreme metal *holistically* and *spatially*' (2007, p. 11; original emphases). Since 'taking genre as the basis of popular music studies privileges musical events as the starting point for analysis' (p. 12), Kahn-Harris's approach seeks to balance discussion of sonic artefacts with that of other aspects of genre including other types of artefacts as well as non-artefactual elements. 'Holism provides a perspective that recognizes the interconnection between different elements of social phenomena', so that 'holistically speaking, extreme metal needs to be considered as the locus for a huge range of interconnected practices, texts, institutions and social phenomena' (p. 11). For this reason, Kahn-Harris mostly avoids discussion of genre and of Walser's use of discourse because 'they are ultimately rooted not in social, but in textual abstractions' (p. 12). Kahn-Harris's preference for scene over genre may result from his sociological discipline, but it is nonetheless pertinent to note the potential for genre to omit aspects of the social to the detriment of metal/hardcore discourse.

Genre in Metal/Hardcore Journalism

A general focus on genre as primarily musical (that is, sonic) can also be found in metal/hardcore journalism in books, magazines, and online. As explored in chapter three, sometimes subtle differences in small-scale phenomena (sonic or otherwise) can result in a given artefact being considered as one genre instead of another. This way of thinking about genre as style is evidenced in the chosen headings of articles like 'The Albums That Invented Grindcore' (Jennings 2015) and 'Origin Stories: Swedish Death Metal' (Ringo 2015). Both articles proclaim to inform the reader about the genre in question, but each rely entirely on sonic artefacts, suggesting that a genre might be wholly understood through the experience of certain artefacts. The significance of different genre names, especially in journalism, may be found in the associated criteria against which artefacts or artists may be judged. Put simply, a good metalcore album is not a good death metal album since the sonic elements connoted by the genre names differ. A good black metal concert is not a good hardcore show since the performance-related aspects connoted by the genre names differ. In principle, this should mean that a given artefact is judged on its merits in relation to the genre to which it is affiliated, but, in practice, this method allows critics to express opinions based upon that genre as much as on the artefact itself.

Shane Mehling asserts that 'deathcore is the BP oil spill. No matter what you or I may do in an attempt to stop it, it just keeps flowing and ruining everything', before noting that the band under review, And Hell Followed With, 'are another faux-death metal band that's been created to tour the world and play breakdowns so kids can show up and be jackasses' (2010, p. 76). Regardless of the quality of the album, it would seem, Mehling dislikes the music based primarily upon his loathing of the genre. Kevin Stewart-Panko takes a slightly more nuanced approach in his review of *Hate* (2012) by Thy Art is Murder. Although he begins by referring to the album as 'deathcore disguised as death metal', he later observes that 'there's nothing to see here that you haven't seen/heard before and it wasn't very interesting in the first place' (Stewart-Panko 2013, p. 103). While his antipathy toward deathcore remains evident, Stewart-Panko's review moves from criticism of the genre itself, to criticism of the artefact in relation to generic norms: 'it's not like Thy Art Is Murder went out

of their way to push the envelope or add a modicum of originality or value to metal as whole', later accusing the band of copying riffs from other deathcore bands and 'farting them out as their own' (p. 103). The same logic may be applied inversely. Multiple reviews of Job for a Cowboy's *Sun Eater* (2014) make explicit mention of the fact that the band played deathcore at the beginning of their career (on *Doom*, 2005), but now play death metal (Saunders 2014; Senior 2014; Snitil 2014). In other words, readers need no longer dismiss this band as deathcore, but rather consider them in relation to the supposedly more prestigious genre of death metal. In this way, genre provides a set of analytical parameters within which a reviewer (or any listener) may assess an artefact or artist, placing the object of analysis alongside similar objects.

In metal/hardcore journalism, then, genre functions contextually. Chapter two highlighted ways in which genre is used as an organising principle in metal/hardcore historiographies, and although this is found principally in books, some websites utilise genre in the same way. Websites like *Cvlt Nation* use genre names to categorise content,[175] and reviews of singles, albums, and live events are frequently tagged with genre names on multiple websites.[176] Echoing the structure of genre histories offered in books by Christe (2003) and Wiederhorn and Turman (2013), *Death Metal Underground*'s section on frequently asked questions includes a subsection on the history of metal that employs genres to demarcate eras,[177] while *Metal Descent* provides guides to various 'Metal Classifications' and 'Metal Forefathers'.[178] These kinds of articles support a relatively broad understanding of genre that, while encompassing sonic artefacts, includes aspects of philosophy and concert etiquette. *Metal Injection*'s annual 'Black Metal History Month', timed to coincide with Black History Month, comprises a series of articles including album reviews, band

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[175] http://www.cvltnation.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[176] My use of 'tagged' online content here refers to searchable keywords users can employ when navigating a website. See Jamie Moore (2017, pp. 109-130) for a discussion of 'collaborative tagging […] the practice of allowing anyone – especially consumers – to freely attach keywords or tags to content' (Golder & Huberman 2006, p. 198) in relation to popular music.

[177] http://www.deathmetal.org/faq/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[178] Genres like doom metal and metalcore can be found in the former category, while the latter group includes surf music and shock rock (http://www.metaldescent.com/, accessed 5/9/2017).

features, histories of the genre, scene reports, explorations of iconography, and comparisons between, for instance, black metal lyrics and poetry.[179] Such broad conceptions of genre align these websites with academic genre theories like those explored above, but they also have a clear basis in the everyday experience of genre participants.

Given the significance of mundane subcultural capital to metal/hardcore participants (Kahn-Harris 2007), various genre historiographies, as well as articles like *Heavy Blog Is Heavy*'s series on the 'Best Of' certain genres (Kupermintz 2014) and 'Starter Kit' for others (Handmaker 2015a), serve a pedagogical function. Because '[g]enre discourse depends […] on a certain sort of shared musical knowledge and experience' (Frith 1996, p. 87), in order to be involved in discussions on genre, and, therefore, to be involved in the genre, one must first learn about the genre in question. However, as should be evident by now, regardless of claims to the contrary genres do not have fixed rules or boundaries. As such, discussion regarding how to classify a given band or album generically can easily become a *debate* about the accuracy of one person's categorisation, or attributes of one genre over another.

The nature and prevalence of such discourse in metal/hardcore is summarised in a satirical article aptly titled 'The Genre Debate'. The article moves from chastising those 'taking part in a genre debate on a YouTube comment section' (Brenocide 2011) to the author's condescending responses to comments left on his previous articles, at once criticising those who participate in such discussions while simultaneously contributing to one. Later in the article, the author notes that whilst fans and critics often disagree on a 'correct' genre classification for a given artist or artefact, bands commonly disassociate themselves with particular genres or with genres at all. Finally, Brenocide states that his 'issue does not lie within the act of classifying metal bands […] [The] issue is with *arguing about it*' (Brenocide 2011; original emphasis). His contention, it would seem, is that no one person is more an authority than another on who or what constitutes a genre; therefore, people should not bother

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[179] http://www.metalinjection.net/category/black-metal-history-month (accessed 5/9/2017).

arguing about it, because no one can claim to be objectively correct. But as Walser and Kahn-Harris remind us, discourse is itself a constituent part of genre. Kahn-Harris observes that 'what constitutes a genre is the subject of considerable debate' (2007, p. 12), but it is also be the case that considerable debate is what constitutes a significant part of genre.[180] Indeed, 'genre debates, notwithstanding their apparent futility, can be regarded as a vital means of perpetuating a genre' (Rockwell 2012, p. 364), since 'during the course of the debate, those participating in it are actively interpreting and listening to the music' (p. 378).[181]

> Generic terms are imprecise and subcultural capital is displayed through precision and knowledge (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 123).

The apparent dichotomy between the language used to describe genres and the intended communication of exacting detail seems insurmountable. If 'black metal' refers to an amorphous multitude of elements including but not limited to sonic, visual, verbal, discursive, and ideological components, there is surely no way for a single term to literally transmit all that information. Moreover, the specific arrangement of properties connoted when one employs a genre name like black metal is not included in the term itself. Put simply, what I know as black metal is different to what someone else knows as black metal. But rather than deem this situation a theoretical impasse, we must consider that such a predicament is an inherent and necessary aspect of genre. It is because of the imprecision of generic terms that participants are drawn to debate the meaning of those terms and, in the act of debating the makeup of a genre, change the very makeup of that which they are debating. Again, this does not preclude genres from having some kind of meaning. Instead, it ensures the active creation and recreation of genres in the act of describing, discussing, and debating the internal logic(s) of those genres. Kahn-Harris's observation that 'a

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[180] Of course, insomuch as I discuss and offer my perspective on the details of various metal/hardcore genres, I am engaged in this genre debate as much as any metal/hardcore participant, academic or otherwise.

[181] 'As long as the debate continues, people continue listening, and as long as people continue listening, performers are able to continue producing the music under discussion. The debate, then, is an important reason why the genre is sustained. Genre, as a contemporary form of musical and cultural expression, thus fuels itself through discourse' (Rockwell 2012, p. 378).

band's music tends to be described by reference to other bands' (2007, p. 123) in written discourse like that found in magazines or online, is mirrored in the way people experience sonic artefacts or performance events. 'Sub-genre names aren't just describing the sound of the music for which they function as a label – they are much more than that. Each one of them is a composite of numerous aspects' (Prokofiev 2013). Genre names are imprecise and unstable (prone to change, as with subgenre qualifiers) in much the same way that the disparate things they describe are imprecise and unstable.

One can draw some preliminary conclusions on musical genre from these overlapping discussions. First and foremost, musical genres are conceptualised as fundamentally multifarious. Regardless of disciplinary approach, all authors here discussed recognise that multiple elements combine to form a given musical genre, and, moreover, that these elements are not limited to purely sonic attributes (incorporating everything from the dress codes and behaviour of audiences to the market forces and power structures of late capitalism). Second, musical genres are rarely understood as fixed or static. By contrast, many academic scholars and especially metal/hardcore journalists conceptualise musical genres as inherently fluid constructs, subject to change over time and in different locales. With these conclusions in mind, it seems uncontroversial to state that musical genres are general, inclusive conceptual groupings that may be put to various uses. For record labels and retailers, genres may function as marketing categories used to better focus these companies' advertising efforts. For artists, genres may function as blueprints within or against which bands compose and perform. For listeners, genres may function as a part of identity constructs, a group larger than oneself into which one can gain membership. Genres can function in these various ways precisely because they are large, general constructs that incorporate innumerable smaller, more specific elements. Genres serve to arrange distinct components in a certain manner, while at the same time affording the space in which such components may be rearranged and their relationships to one another adapted.

Style

If genre is understood as amorphous, emerging from an amalgam of multiple sources, forces, and agencies, different terminology may be required when referring to specific elements of music culture. One such term commonly employed to this end is 'style'. Like genre, style may be applied to non-sonic phenomena such as iconography or attitude (Hebdige 1979), but in musicological literature style and genre often feature alongside one another. Instances of style and of genre in popular metal/hardcore discourse can appear interchangeable, owing in part to their shared vocabulary (see below).[182] While some authors favour one term over another, there appears a general consensus among music scholars that a basic distinction between style and genre is that the former is more specific than the latter. This simple division is challenged by popular musicologists like Middleton (1990) and Moore (2001a, 2001b, 2012) who conceptualise the terms as referring to different aspects of music and advocate their use as such. This disagreement can be blamed in part on the (supposed) misapplication of terms: genre and style describe specific functions in traditional musicology, especially when applied to Western art music, but are generally less discrete or fixed when used in popular music discourse. My use of the terms genre and style are based upon their application specifically in metal/hardcore discourse. However, it is my intention to explore the sometimes-subtle differentiation between genre and style, and to highlight the significance of this discrepancy in constructions of meaning.

David Brackett offers a representative example of the distinction between genre and style used commonly in popular musicology when observing that 'genres are not defined by characteristics of musical style alone but also by performance rituals, visual appearance, the types of social and ideological connotations associated with them, and their relationships to the material conditions of production' (2002, p. 67). Here, 'musical style' applies exclusively to sonic phenomena, and thus style is clearly subsumed by genre. However, the relationship between genre and style need not be understood as one

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[182] The interchangeable use of 'genre' and 'style' in popular music discourse has been discussed by Fabbri (1982a, p. 55), Holt (2007, p. 12), and Shuker (2008, p. 119), among others.

subordinate to another. Since '"musical style" refers to a bundle of characteristics that distinguish a socially recognized musical category or genre' (Brackett 2002, p. 66), discussion of style may be better understood as a way to refer explicitly to specific sonic phenomena, with a tacit recognition of associated general non-sonic features. In this formulation, style allows the analyst to circumscribe exploration of particular elements in a manner somewhat abstracted from larger genre narratives. This may be an effective way of negotiating problematic inconsistencies between established genre norms and specific examples of those norms being challenged. The use of clean vocals in death metal, as in Fleshgod Apocalypse's 'Thru Our Scars' (*Mafia*, 2010, 1:43-2:10), might be understood by casting the clean vocals as a stylistic anomaly; this example is still death metal (genre), but with a non-standard element of style. This reading of the style-genre relationship (Brackett 2002, p. 79) begins to account for the flexibility of genre: a band may remain part of a given genre even if they occasionally utilise non-normative stylistic elements.[183]

In situations where generic norms are seemingly disregarded, however, questions arise surrounding (1) the identity of the non-standard element of style, and (2) the political significance of employing that style. In a generic model, specific sonic phenomena are not neutral – the particular style of clean vocals used in an otherwise standard death metal setting have been borrowed (Williams 2009) from elsewhere, and their use is therefore bound up with larger generic associations. And if one understands style as analogous to Fabbri's (1982a) formal and technical rules, as Brackett does (2002, p. 79), the use of non-standard stylistic elements goes some way to undermining those precepts. The style-genre relationship is not fixed, but is nevertheless useful as a connection between the general (genre) and the specific (style). The significance of this relationship is demonstrated by those who argue for a different conception of genre and of style.

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[183] Reviews of Fleshgod Apocalypse's music routinely refer to the band as death metal, though some add subgenre qualifiers like 'neo-classical' (Rowe 2013a) or 'symphonic' (Synn 2013).

Genre vs. Style

A proponent of reassessing the style-genre relationship, Moore's article 'Categorical Conventions in Music Discourse: Style and Genre' (2001a) outlines various issues one encounters when dealing with these terms.[184]

> [D]ifferent writers identify "heavy metal" as both a style and a genre. There seem to be three ways of understanding such a situation. First, it could mean that, whatever "heavy metal" is, it has some characteristics that pertain to style and others that pertain to genre. Secondly, it could mean that it is both style and genre, in which case one concept is necessarily subsidiary to the other. Thirdly, the terms may be identical (or at least represent equivalent epistemologies) (2001a, p. 432).

Moore's observation that style and genre are often conflated in both popular and academic discourse is, of course, the crux of his argument for a clear differentiation between the two terms. He notes that vocabulary is commonly shared between discussions of style and of genre (a point to which I return below), thus privileging context as the primary method of demarcation. One could imagine a case in which all three of his readings of the style-genre relationship are accurate: death metal has characteristics of genre and, in labelling them as such, has characteristics of style (specific compositional devices, say); insomuch as style pertains exclusively to sonic phenomena, it is subordinate to larger genre conceptions; and depending on the level of enculturation of the claimant, death metal style may equate to death metal genre (or vice versa).

Moore's call for a conceptualisation of genre and style 'where the terms have different areas of reference' (2001a, p. 433) recalls their definitions in older musical analyses.[185] This notion is similar in kind to Kahn-Harris's remark that 'in more traditional forms of musicology, "genre" signifies a mode of producing music (e.g. "ballads"), whereas "style" signifies the specific mode of producing those genres (e.g. "heavy metal ballads")' (2007, pp. 11-12). However, Moore's

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[184] Moore discussed this topic earlier, in *Rock: the Primary Text* (2001b, first published in 1993), and prefers 'style' to 'genre' throughout *Song Means* (2012).
[185] Summarising a discussion of genre by Carl Dahlhaus (1988), Moore notes that '[p]rior to the seventeenth century, […] genre was defined primarily by a piece of music's functions, its text (if present) and its textures' (Moore 2001a, p. 437).

realignment of the style-genre relationship is more precise. He offers 'four ways of distinguishing between the realms of reference of the two terms' (Moore 2001a, p. 441), summarised in Table 1.

Style	Genre
Articulation of musical gestures	Identity and context of musical gestures
Poietic (production)	Esthetic (reception)
Relative autonomy	Socially constrained
Hierarchical levels (global to local)	Hierarchical (but subgenre ≠ sub-style)

Table 1: Summary of Moore's differences between style and genre (Moore 2001a, pp. 441-442).

The first of Moore's distinctions speaks most directly to the notion of style as 'musical' (internal, sonic) features, and, subsequently, of genre as 'extra-musical' (external, associative). His second demarcation follows readily from the first: in pertaining to the articulation of musical gestures, style must refer to the production of those gestures, and, similarly, in pertaining to the context of those gestures, genre necessarily concerns itself with the reception of musical gestures. But this point reconfigures the style-genre relationship so that style is produced by the artist (composer/performer/producer) and genre is received by the listener (fan/critic/analyst). The relative autonomy afforded to style in Moore's third distinction comes as a result of the focus on the production of sonic elements, as such details need not be tethered to 'outside' forces. By contrast, the external nature of genre is socially constructed and, thus, socially constrained. Finally, Moore notes that while both style and genre operate hierarchically, these hierarchies function differently. Style hierarchy can be understood on a continuum from what some might call a code (global) to idiolect (local) (Moore 2001a, p. 442). Crucially, style operating at global levels 'is usually considered to be socially constituted, while it may operate with greater

degrees of autonomy at more local levels' (Moore 2001a, p. 442). In other words, style interacts with genre more directly at the level of code, and, conversely, style has greater independence from genre at the level of idiolect. Genre is also observed to operate hierarchically, 'but with the distinction that "sub-genres" cover an entire genre territory in a way that "sub-styles" do not' (Moore 2001a, p. 442). The difference between subgenre and substyle may simply emerge from a disparity in scope: if a genre has grown to the macro-level, subgenres may be understood as meso-level subsections of the larger genre, but the specificity of style implies a reading as micro-level phenomena. Another way to view this dissimilarity is in differing focuses: subgenres often denote particular emphasis on relatively specific aspects of a genre (perhaps at the expense of others), but nevertheless refer to most or all of the elements that comprise genre (sonic and non-sonic), whereas sub-styles may refer to a specific aspect of an already specific style – death metal vocals as a subset of death metal style, for instance.

These distinctions between style and genre make clear a dynamic style-genre relationship in which the boundaries of what is style and what is genre converge just as often as diverge. As with the other concepts discussed in this chapter, this lack of fixity is partly to blame for confusion between what is meant by style and genre. Moore's stance on the style-genre relationship is useful to our understanding of the functions of genre in twenty-first century metal and hardcore, however 'in both lay and academic forms of popular music writing, genre has taken on a more holistic meaning, covering both the music that is produced and the style in which it is produced' (Kahn-Harris, p. 12). An understanding of style subsumed by genre seemingly accounts for their shared vocabulary. The claim 'Sick of It All are hardcore' therefore refers to the relationship between the band and the genre known as hardcore, *as well as* between a particular sonic artefact (1994's *Scratch the Surface*, for instance) and the style known as hardcore. In this instance, there remains a distinction (albeit slight) between genre and style; however, their continued conflation allows for a discursive pluralism: rather than consider style and genre as opposing forces, we might think of them as complementary.

Genre as Style

Following Fabbri (2007), Philip Tagg defines style as 'a set of *musical-structural* rules or norms' and genre as 'a *larger set of cultural codes that also include musical rules*' (Tagg 2013, p. 267; original emphases). Tagg builds upon this distinction by outlining what he terms 'style flags', which he splits into two categories: 'style indicators' and 'genre synecdoches' (2013, p. 522).[186] A style flag is a musical 'sign type [that] uses particular sounds to identify a particular musical style and often, by connotative extension, the cultural genre to which that music style belongs', while style indicators are 'those that establish a "home" style or musical idiom' and genre synecdoches are 'those that refer from inside a home style to a "foreign" style and to the genre associated with that foreign style' (p. 522). In other words, a style indicator is comprised of compositional norms commonly associated with a particular style in such a way as to indicate to the listener that they are hearing a particular style. The combination of one or more dissimilar style indicators may engender a reading of one as 'foreign' to the other, prompting the listener to call to mind wider genre concepts associated with this foreign style.

Mark Slater's proprietary and efferent categories of timbre (2011, pp. 369-373) provide a way to understand the mechanism by which Tagg's style flags, style indicators, and genre synecdoches function.[187] A style flag only serves as a style indicator (establishing a home style) after a listener makes a 'proprietary categorisation [that] requires the ability to attribute a distinct identity to sounds and then to group these sounds into typologies encompassing different levels of musical activity from the dispersed (a genre) to the highly localised (a fleeting or imminent sound on a single track)' (Slater 2011, p. 372). Similarly, the referential ability of genre synecdoche may be more accurately described as efferent insomuch as 'those references emanate from a specific locus of musical experience: the artefact being perceived' (Slater 2011, p. 373). Thus, the capacity for sounds to function as style indicator or genre synecdoche is

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[186] Style indicator and genre synecdoche were first introduced in Tagg (1992).

[187] Part of his 'poetic-ecological model' (Slater 2011, pp. 373-375), Slater proposes these categories drawing upon the work of Denis Smalley (1994, 1997) and Eric Clarke (2005).

predicated upon a listener's enculturation within a given genre resulting in a level of competence with that genre's codes (Middleton 1990, pp. 172-176).

The distinction between a style indicator and a genre synecdoche is, according to Tagg, contingent upon the establishment of a home style and the subsequent interjection of a foreign style. More directly, Tagg's style flags rely upon the listener identifying home and foreign styles as such: the listener must identify a style as normative, before noting a different style and identifying this second style as atypical. In order to accomplish this, style indicators 'tend to be constant for the duration of an entire piece' (Tagg 2013, p. 523), thereby clearly establishing a particular style one can interpret as that piece's home style. Foreign styles need only be hinted at, since 'including part of the "other style"' is sufficient to 'allude not only to that other style in its entirety but also to the complete genre of which that other musical style is a part' (p. 524). This uneven relationship, wherein home styles must be stated at length but foreign styles may be alluded to in a more oblique fashion, might be most effective when the stylistic boundaries of a particular genre are clear to a given listener. A common style indicator for death metal and related subgenres is the use of low growls, possibly accompanied by high screams. And, conversely, clean sung vocals are so uncommon in death metal as to be understood fairly unambiguously as 'foreign'. In this sense, Travis Ryan's use of clean vocals part way through Cattle Decapitation's 'Lifestalker' (*Monolith of Humanity*, 2012) is an obvious example of a foreign style encroaching upon the established home style. Up until this point,[188] Ryan utilises the low growls and high screams more common to the deathgrind subgenre, firmly establishing a norm against which to employ his sung vocals. While his raspy singing, replete with indistinct diction, is hardly as clean as other examples in metal/hardcore, within the deathgrind subgenre his use of clearly pitched and non-distorted vocals can be classified as 'foreign'. In this example, the foreign style may not provoke connotations of a particular genre, as in a prototypical genre synecdoche, but evocation of music outside the normal purview of deathgrind is nevertheless significant.

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[188] Clean vocals first appear at 1:30.

A slightly different example is provided by Whitechapel's 'Our Endless War' (*Our Endless War*, 2014), which is 'barely a deathcore song', instead being 'basically a straight-up hardcore song. Only the middle of the song, with its big, fat helpings of groove, really feels like the Whitechapel we know' (Rosenberg 2014b). Here then, the foreign style (hardcore) is established before, and perhaps more clearly than, the home style (deathcore). Given that Tagg's style flags seem intended to operate most effectively at the level of a single song, one might say that 'Our Endless War' is a hardcore song that includes an allusion to deathcore. But Rosenberg's reading of the song is in the context of the band's oeuvre; that is, Whitechapel are known to be a deathcore band, thus the band's home style is deathcore by default, even when deathcore style indicators are less prevalent than those of another genre. Either analysis conforms to Tagg's genre synecdoche insomuch as specific sonic phenomena (instantiations of style) engender in the listener related notions of genre.

Tagg's use of 'style' and 'genre' are differentiated by their levels of specificity: style refers to specific aspects of the sonic artefact (compositional/performance-related devices), while genre refers to broader connotations and associations (non-sonic) of the music (everything from audience demographics to iconography, from record labels to public perceptions of the music). This being the case, why does Tagg insist that genre synecdoche only functions when the listener encounters a foreign style in a piece of music?[189] Given their relationship to one another, surely any style indicator functions as a synecdoche for a genre. If one interprets swung rhythms as indicative of jazz, then that style indicator serves as a synecdoche for jazz whenever it is recognised, irrespective of its use in a jazz piece (home) or in metal (foreign).

This point becomes crucial when one considers various metal/hardcore Hybrid Genres (see chapter three). In the case of metalcore, one might apply the

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[189] Tagg includes an entry in his online glossary of terms that clarifies the status of foreign style: genre synecdoche is a '[m]useme or museme compound consisting of single element(s) of musical style other than that of the analysis object' (www.tagg.org/articles/ptgloss.html, accessed 5/9/2017); a similar definition can be found in Tagg (2013, p. 589).

mantle style indicator to the combination or even juxtaposition of stylistic elements drawn from metal and from hardcore. The mix of styles heard on Killswitch Engage's *Alive or Just Breathing* (2002) is such that recognising either metal or hardcore as a home style is problematic. The album's first track, 'Numbered Days', begins with a fragmented chug riff and a solo roar of 'The time approaches!', before building over sustained chords and spoken-word vocals into the full chug riff (0:00-0:40). In isolation, one might interpret this as indicative of hardcore (perhaps metallic hardcore to some listeners), but the harmonised 'pedal point riff' (Mynett 2013, p. 143) of the pre-chorus (0:50-1:10) is most reminiscent of melodic death metal. The subsequent breakdown (1:10-1:30) might reinforce hardcore as home style and metal as a brief sojourn to the foreign, but the pre-chorus riff immediately resurfaces (1:31-1:51) and is now followed by a tremolo riff section (1:51-2:11) and chorus with clean vocals and an ascending C minor chord sequence (2:11-2:31). By this point it seems unnecessary to continue ascribing the status of home and foreign styles, since before the end of the album's first track a blend of styles is readily apparent. Indeed, the extent of stylistic mixing in Killswitch Engage's music implores the listener to attune their ears not to individual styles but to the combination of those styles. Rather than metal or hardcore, metalcore's home style might be best understood as an admixture of the two. When one encounters a genre that foregrounds the mixing of various styles, the notions of explicit home and foreign styles are undermined.[190]

Implementing Style

Moore notes the potential ambiguity with Tagg's genre synecdoche when asking of a particular piece: '[w]hich sound is acting as the synecdoche for a foreign style here?' (Moore 2012, p. 224). Despite a general tendency to consider style as concerning strictly sonic phenomena, as previously discussed, a more significant defining feature of style is an implied level of specificity. To this end, one might consider *specific* non-sonic phenomena as indicating style in a similar way to sonic elements already discussed. When

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[190] This balancing of two or more styles is evident in John Covach's use of 'stylistic reference' (1997, p. 10) in relation to Yes's combination of classical and rock styles in 'Close to the Edge' (*Close to the Edge*, 1972).

presented with only an audio recording of a piece, it may be difficult to discern which style is foreign and which is home, however if the listener is presented with additional information about the recording, they might be better equipped to identify home and foreign styles based upon wider genre associations. Visual clues may be detected if one views a music video or even a video of the piece in live performance, or, perhaps less overtly, if one has access to the iconography of album/single artwork, band logo, or press (promotion) photos.[191] Verbal style markers may be exhibited in the form of band names, song titles, lyrics, or even the name of the artist's record label. Weinstein splits her 'heavy metal code' (2000, p. 21) into three dimensions: sonic, visual, and verbal (pp. 22-43). In much the same way that specific compositional devices and performance techniques may serve as indicators of style, there exist visual and verbal tropes common to certain metal/hardcore genres or subgenres.

Many metal/hardcore music videos are based around images of the band performing in an exaggerated manner, miming to studio audio and overemphasising certain gestures deemed normative in their metal/hardcore genre (moshing, for instance).[192] Within this paradigm, though, there exists some room for manoeuvre, allowing the viewer/listener to differentiate one genre from another. Black metal bands frequently appear in full corpse paint (Patterson 2013) and black leather in music videos, as in the video for Cradle of Filth's 'Her Ghost in the Fog' (*Midian*, 2000),[193] such that the visual trope has also been employed by blackened death metal band Behemoth in the video for 'At the Left Hand ov God' (*The Apostasy*, 2007). One may interpret corpse paint as a style flag of black metal; that is, a specific iconography that might establish a home style (style indicator) of black metal, and that can therefore be employed in a non-black metal context to evoke associations of black metal (genre synecdoche). In the music video for Gorgoroth's 'Carving a Giant' (*Ad Majorem Sathanas Gloriam*, 2006), corpse paint serves as a visual style

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[191] Visual style plays a substantial role in Hebdige's exploration of subculture through style (1979).

[192] See Kennedy (2013) for an analysis of gesture in metal/hardcore performance artefacts.

[193] Other examples include the music videos to Immortal's 'All Shall Fall' (*All Shall Fall*, 2009) and Marduk's 'Souls for Belial' (*Serpent Sermon*, 2012).

indicator, engendering the viewer to interpret the video as an example of black metal. If corpse paint is a common style indicator of black metal, the lack of this kind of makeup coupled with the 'normal' attire worn by Abigail Williams in the music video to 'Into the Ashes' (*In the Shadow of a Thousand Suns*, 2008) might be indicative of a foreign visual style.[194]

Weinstein's verbal dimension of the metal code (2000, p. 31) may include style flags in metal/hardcore lyrics and band names. Doug Moore's exploration of 'Death Metal English' (2013a) highlights the esoteric nature of lyrical constructions shared by many death metal bands, typified by Nile's 'Chapter of Obeisance Before Giving Breath to the Inert One in the Presence of the Crescent Shaped Horns' (*Annihilation of the Wicked*, 2005). Similarly, *Metal Sucks* authors have observed various trends in band names associated with metalcore (Rosenberg 2010b), deathcore (Sergeant D 2011c), and djent/progressive metal (Neilstein 2014a). Scottish death metal band Party Cannon satirise both orthodox death metal band names (D. Moore 2014) and band logos by employing multi-coloured bubble writing rather than the usual jagged, root-like, black and white metal logos (Pasbani 2015).[195] The use of Death Metal English, then, might be understood as indicative of a home style, while Party Cannon's name is a foreign verbal style within death metal.

Style flags can be understood to operate in sonic, visual, and verbal dimensions, but the style-genre relationship might also be considered discursively. As Moore observes, the style-genre relationship is complicated by a shared vocabulary (2001a, p. 432). In popular/journalistic discourse especially, explicit distinctions between references to style and to genre are rare. Instead, reviewers and commentators will frequently use the same term when referring to a genre, an artist, an album, a song, or even a riff or other compositional device. In these instances, the lines between style and genre can be particularly indistinct. Peterson (2009) and his interviewees use the term

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[194] Visual style flags can also be observed in the presentation of bands in live performance. For example, despite both artists performing at the same festival, the brooding stoicism of progressive death metal band Opeth contrasts sharply with the energetic, carefree moshing of metalcore band Unearth (both performances included in Spangenberg, 2004).

[195] See Smialek (2015, pp. 154-159) for a discussion of extreme metal band logos and fonts.

'hardcore' to denote a specific musical style, a genre, a scene (or multiple scenes), and a lifestyle. Undertow drummer Ryan Murphy suggests that '[h]ardcore is first and foremost a form of music. […] Additionally, I believe that there are more components to hardcore other than the music' (Peterson 2009, p. 6). Here, hardcore is discussed as both style and as genre, as a specific form of music and as something more than simply that particular form of music. Most significant, Murphy utilises the same term when citing two distinct conceptions of hardcore. This use of the term is echoed by Refused drummer David Sandström, who contends that '[h]ardcore is probably the musical genre that is least interested in music. Hardcore bands are only interested in hardcore' (in Green 2010, p. 63). Sandström appears to consider hardcore as assuredly multiple: as musical style and as something other than style.

The notion of discursive style flags may affect how one interprets the style-genre relationship in popular metal/hardcore discourse insomuch as the apparent interchangeability of style and of genre frequent in album/artist reviews in magazines or online may in fact be examples of discursive style indicators and/or genre synecdoche. When noting that Antagony's 'End of the Circle' (*See Through These Eyes*, 2001) 'jumps from Death Metal to breakdowns to Slam Metal to crazy Grind' (Petey 2013), the author mixes style/genre names (death metal, grind) with specific compositional devices (breakdowns) in such a way that equates the two terms of references. In other words, Petey's use of the term 'death metal' is less a reference to the entire genre of death metal, and more an indication of death metal as (a) style. While one might find examples of Taggian style indicators denoted discursively – that is, establishing a home style as part of discourse – more common in metal/hardcore literature is the use of what we might term discursive stylistic references, recalling Covach's (1997) term. Similar to their sonic counterparts, discursive stylistic references refer to those sections of a piece that might be described as indicative of one style or another. Crucially, Covach's references allow for multiple styles to be referenced alongside one another without the need for a clear distinction between a home style and various foreign styles. Indeed, Petey's claim that Antagony are 'the true fathers of Deathcore' is based upon his analysis of the band mixing 'elements of Death/Grind and Hardcore'

(Petey 2013). Since deathcore comprises a mixture of elements of death metal and hardcore (and to a less obvious extent, grindcore and metalcore), the styles Petey identifies are more accurately described as discursive stylistic references, without one subservient to another, as opposed to as discursive style indicators.

Although Taggian musical synecdoche is concerned primarily with identifying a particular sonic element (or elements) as foreign, before then associating those elements with wider notions of genre, the key concept of synecdoche, 'a figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole (*pars pro toto*)' (Tagg 2013, p. 524), is also applicable discursively. Take, for example, the following quote from a review of Burst's *Origo* (2005): '[a]ny given song on *Origo* can span black metal, hardcore, prog, psychedelia and, of course, crust' (Grow 2006, p. 70). The reviewer notes multiple style references over the course of the album, but his use of terms with plural meaning (as style and/or as genre) functions in a similarly plural way. First, by identifying various stylistic references, Grow claims the deployment of different styles within a single album. Second, and more importantly, in referencing specific styles discursively, Grow also encourages the reader to interpret these style references in relation to larger genre constructs. The use of identical terminology for both style and genre is key here. Grow is citing individual styles (black metal, prog) directly, but since he does not specify what he means by 'black metal' – whether the album has a lo-fi production aesthetic, the vocals are frequently high screams, or riffs comprise extended sections of tremolo-picking – the reader is left to fill in the blanks themselves. In this case, Grow's terminology acts as the inverse of Taggian synecdoche: rather than citing a part to reference the whole (a riff associated with a particular genre that engenders the listener to relate that single riff to the totality of a genre), Grow cites the whole to reference a part (a style/genre name associated with specific sonic phenomena that engenders the reader to relate the totality of that genre name to a specific sonic element). On the one hand, the reviewer hears various style indicators and identifies them as genre synecdoches, noting that certain sections reference multiple foreign genres. On the other hand, when describing these moments, Grow refers to genre *as* synecdoche; that is, style/genre terms in place of specific elements of

composition and performance. This kind of discursive synecdoche allows the reader to imagine which specific parts of a given genre are being deployed in the given example, in much the same way that Tagg's musical synecdoche allows the listener to imagine his or her own conception of whatever genre is being referenced.

In a related manner, reviewers or journalists may refer to a specific attribute of a band or album in terms that ostensibly denote a whole genre, but more specifically denote a particular aspect of style. When describing Bleeding Through vocalist Brandan Schieppati as 'a death metal singer who's forever forlorn' (Parks 2006a, p. 73), Andrew Parks alludes to Schieppati's somewhat gravelly, relatively low-pitched roars as heard on *The Truth* (2006), the album under review. Parks' claim seeks to differentiate Schieppati's vocals from those of other vocalists within the metalcore genre. In essence, then, Parks' assertion that Schieppati is a death metal singer has less to do with the death metal genre, and more to do with a specific aspect of what might be called a death metal style utilised in a metalcore setting. This use of discursive genre synecdoche – citing the whole in order to refer to a part – may be recognised as an example of genre *as* style. The shared vocabulary combines with the related but nonetheless distinct conceptions of death metal as genre and death metal as style (or styles) to accommodate a musical example that may be best described as an instance of metalcore genre albeit with aspects of death metal style.

It is in this malleable, accommodating form that the dynamic style-genre relationship becomes most useful. As outlined in the previous chapter, links between small- and large-scale phenomena may be connoted discursively in the form of genre and subgenre names. This connection is actualised by the style-genre relationship, be it sonic, visual, verbal, or discursive. Here, one might return to Moore's style/genre dialectic and the issue of agency. In chapter three, the notion that (sub)genre names affect the production and reception of sonic elements may be construed as an essentially aesthetic claim, imposing classification. By contrast, perspectives on the style-genre relationship in the present chapter frame any implementation of style codes as poietic, designed

to elicit certain responses from the listener. In essence, therefore, the relationship between small-scale compositional/performance-related devices and large-scale conceptions of genre is of the same kind as the relationship between style as specific elements of sonic/visual/verbal/discursive phenomena and genre as fluid amalgams of various styles.

The central element of the style-genre relationship is specificity. Citations of style are often attempts to denote a specific aspect of genre while simultaneously connoting other elements of that genre. When one refers to death growls, for example, one is citing a specific sonic phenomenon *and* connoting the visual, verbal, and discursive elements of death metal. Depending on one's level of enculturation, death growls may connote anything from long-haired, scary men screaming incoherently, gory album artwork, and gruesome lyrical imagery, to particular death metal vocalists, certain music videos or live performances, preferred sleeve artists, and memorable lyrics. Indeed, for some, death growls may connote not only death metal, but also deathcore and grindcore. Referring to style is thus a way to address the inherent multiplicity and magnitude of genre constructs. In this sense, all claims to style and even identifying a single song, album, or band as a certain genre is employing synecdoche. Since a single artefact cannot encompass the totality of a style or a genre, that song, album, or band function as synecdoche for the whole genre. This relationship between a single exemplar and the multifarious genre construct also works at the level of subgenres and may even engender the creation of subgenre qualifiers. Consequently, a band like Necrophagist can function as synecdoche for technical death metal while bands like Morbid Angel and Obituary serve as synecdoche for death metal more generally.

Genre/Style and Type/Token

So how can one or more bands, albums, or songs be understood as synecdoche for a genre? Perhaps a more pertinent question is the inverse: how might a genre be understood as exampled by one or more bands? Julian Dodd offers a possible answer to this enquiry when proposing type/token theory as a way to understand the ontology of music (2007). Designed to address the

ontology of a musical work, Dodd's type/token theory 'states that a musical work is a type whose tokens are datable, locatable patterns of sounds: sound-sequence-events, in other words' (2007, p. 2). This relationship between type and token, it transpires, is key to how we might understand the style-genre relationship in metal/hardcore.

In short, types are 'abstract, fixed, unchanging, and eternally existent entities' (Dodd 2007, p. 36), while tokens are performances of a given type (sound-sequence events). This model attempts to reconcile the supposed repeatability of musical works with the contradictory view that listening to a performance of a work constitutes experiencing the totality of that work (sonicism). As abstract, metaphysical entities, types can only be accessed by (or through) their tokens: when one performs a particular work, they are tokening the type. While Dodd's use of type/token is based on understanding the nature of a work, we can apply this theory to our explication of genre and style. Conceptualising genre as type and style as token may help to explain the genre-style relationship by forcing us to consider its ontology. Genres, *qua* types (to borrow Dodd's phrase), are thus understood as abstract entities that may be tokened by various instantiations of style (be they live performance event, recorded performance, or other previously mentioned visual, verbal, or discursive citations of style). Whereas Dodd's sonicist perspective interprets an individual performance (a token) of a work as experiencing the totality of the work, an instantiation of style (a token) can be understood as signifying an entire genre through connotation (synecdoche).[196]

The overlap of terminology discussed earlier is accounted for since 'the type/token theorist can acknowledge that works are not themselves sound structures, yet explain away the fact that we speak of them *as if* they were' (Dodd 2007, p. 85; original emphasis); for 'once it is granted that works of music are types, it follows that any predicate true of a performance of a work *W* in virtue of its being a token of *W* is thereby true of *W* itself' (p. 85; original

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[196] I acknowledge the substantial difference in scale between Dodd's type (a single musical work) and my application of his model to genre. However, even a genre's tokens remain 'datable [and] locatable' (Dodd 2007, p. 2), regardless of their medium.

emphasis). In other words, one might refer to Darkthrone's 'Summer of the Diabolical Holocaust' (*Under a Funeral Moon*, 1993) as black metal because, as a token of that genre type the song will share predicates (specific traits) with the type. If a song must include passages of tremolo-picking to be classified as a token of black metal, then it follows that tremolo-picking passages are a predicate of the type black metal. The abstract type 'black metal' is thus tokened by a song instantiating the type's predicates. Given that the predicate 'tremolo-picking passage(s)' is not exclusive to black metal, this predicate alone is not enough to token the black metal type – it could also be heard in a token of death metal, metalcore, deathcore, or thrash. Rather, only a specific constellation of predicates – sonic, visual, verbal, discursive – can be understood as essential for a song being a token of black metal. While it is true that an individual predicate may be shared between two or more types/tokens, it is also true that two or more different types may share a token 'as long as the condition something must meet to be a (properly formed) token of K is distinct from the condition that something must meet to be a token of K^*, K and K^* are distinct, even if they share exactly the same tokens' (p. 41; original emphases). This paradigm is crucial to aligning type/token theory with extant notions in metal/hardcore historiography, since it accounts for conflicting claims about the generic status of a style.

Perhaps the most contentious issue with applying Dodd's type/token theory to our understanding of the style-genre relationship in metal and hardcore is his assertion that types exist eternally: '[m]usical Platonism holds that any work of music exists at all times (if it exists at all)' (Dodd 2007, p. 106). Again, most perspectives on metal/hardcore historiography contend that genres and subgenres come into being at different times. With varying specificity, metal/hardcore historians proffer numerous dates (and, sometimes, locations) at which one can plot the beginning of a given genre. Despite this idea serving as the foundation of the diachronic view of metal evolution found in many histories of metal and hardcore, the specific process of genre creation remains unclear. Christe prefaces his metal historiography with 'A Brief Headbanging History of Time' (2003, pp. viii-xi), giving the first entry as 'February 13, 1970: Black Sabbath debut [*Black Sabbath*, 1970a] released' (p. viii). Though Christe

specifies a particular date and album, he gives no indication of *how* this album might function as the starting point of the heavy metal genre. Later in the book, Christe notes that Death are '[o]ften credited as the original death metal band' (p. 241) and that 'the second generation of black metal began with Mayhem' (p. 270). Since Christe offers little in the way of explaining how artists can be interpreted as instigating these genres, perhaps the reader is to assume that releases by Death and Mayhem inspired fellow musicians to compose and perform similar music. However, an artist inspiring another does not constitute the instantiation of an entire genre or even subgenre. Instead, this post hoc model in which certain bands or albums are retrospectively ascribed the status of generic originators follows the same canon framework found in histories of Western art music (Burkholder et al. 2010), jazz (DeVeaux 1991), and popular music (Desler 2013). This is not to diminish the significance of art influencing people to make their own art, merely to highlight that narratives regarding the apparent creation of genres frequently rely upon a causal relationship between an individual artist or recording and understandings of a whole genre. For Western art music's masters and jazz's icons (Whyton 2010), substitute so-called metal gods (Weinstein 2000) – those artists who sowed the seeds out of which grew a period/movement/genre. At the other end of the generic lifecycle, the much-vaunted death of, say, jazz, punk, metal, and even metalcore (Vane-Tempest 2014), contradict a thesis of genre *qua* type.

Following Peter Kivy (1983, p. 113), Dodd states that

> [W]hat is essential for our concept of musical composition is that its *creativity* be recognized, not that composers be conceived as people who bring things into being. And at this point we can draw an analogy between musical composition and the kinds of creative discoveries made in mathematics and theoretical science (Dodd 2007, p. 113; original emphasis).

This notion of creative discovery is particularly appealing when conceiving of genre as type since it accounts for the recognition of genre 'after the event', once the genre has been tokened. By retaining the idea of creativity, a Platonist model accommodates those artists who claim they always intended to innovate music in the course of creating a new genre, as well as those who apparently stumbled upon a new type by accident. Since Wynton Marsalis Septet's *In This*

House, On This Morning (1994) 'has always existed, but it took a composer with a huge musical imagination, coupled with a sensitive feel for the history of jazz, to discover it and score it' (Dodd 2007, p. 113), Wynton Marsalis's creative agency is not diminished. Indeed, Marsalis's relationship with the genre, his 'sensitive feel for the history of jazz', is crucial to the act of creative discovery: Marsalis was able to discover *In This House, On This Morning* precisely because of his experiences as a jazz musician. It is, therefore, no coincidence that genres are tokened by artists thoroughly enculturated within metal/hardcore. Finally, given 'the bare metaphysical possibility of *In This House, On This Morning* being composed by someone else at some other time—thereby denying that works are "tied" to their composers and the musico-historical contexts in which they are composed' (Dodd 2007, p. 126), musical Platonism allows for what we might call a de-centred creative discovery wherein people in multiple locations might token the same type. Applying Slater's two-type ontology (2016) to genre,[197] one might contend that a genre is 'located at the point at which its types are tokened, but it is only as eternal as its actions and objects permit' (Slater 2016, p. 175). Thus, style as a token of genre affords both individual instantiations in the form of actions and quasi-permanence in the form of objects.

Given earlier assertions of genre as fluid, how can we conceive of genre as fixed, unchanging type?

> [T]ypes may be indeterminate in two distinct ways. First of all, the correctness condition laid down by a type may be such that whether a well-formed token need have a certain feature is simply left unspecified; and second, this condition may be such that it specifies a certain feature in a fuzzy way (Dodd 2007, p. 139).

While types are indeed fixed, their indeterminate nature affords variations in any number of features, either through unclear specification or through a lack of specification altogether. Taking Dodd's second point first, it seems perfectly acceptable that genres as types may include elements that are specified 'in a

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[197] 'The ontology of music-making in the project studio that I propose features two types, action and sound, each of which has to be tokened for us to be able to locate an instantiation of a studio project' (Slater 2016, pp. 175-176).

fuzzy way'. Unlike Dodd's focus on a musical work composed by a single author, multiple people in a variety of places may creatively discover a genre, thereby making it impossible for fixed, specific conditions to be laid down. Both Killswitch Engage's *The End of Heartache* (2004) and Parkway Drive's *Killing with a Smile* (2005) are tokens of the type metalcore, but the former includes clean vocals whereas the latter does not. Since both of these albums token the same type, we can infer that one condition of being a properly formed token of the metalcore type is the use of a range of vocal deliveries including clean and distorted (but not necessarily both). The kind of collective creative discovery that dictates genres as type can lead to unspecified conditions quite simply. Bleeding Through's inclusion of a keyboardist could have marked them out as tokening something other than metalcore on albums like *This is Love, This is Murderous* (2003), but their position in the metalcore genre and subsequent metalcore bands using the same instrumentation suggests that conditions of metalcore instrumentation were left unspecified until first tokened.[198] The collective creative discovery of genre through such tokens does not invalidate genre *qua* type, since '[t]he fact that works of music are indeterminate in the two senses just set out leaves play for the possibility of such culturally determined variance in opinion over what constitutes a correct performance' (Dodd 2007, p. 140).

Where genre provides a general grouping of numerous diverse elements, style afford specificity. In pertaining to particular sonic, visual, and verbal features, style instantiates genre. Style functions as synecdoche for genre when one describes, say, growls as death metal vocals – denoting a specific type of vocal delivery and simultaneously connoting a general concept of genre. This mechanism can be understood as style tokening the genre type, providing a discrete example of an aspect of the genre. In a similar manner to chapter three's relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena, the style/genre connection accounts for metal/hardcore's adaptability, enabling participants to shape the music/culture.

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[198] Other metalcore bands with keyboards include Attack Attack!, The Word Alive, and Sky Eats Airplane.

Scene

Joining the lexicon of popular music studies during the early 1990s through oft-cited work by Will Straw (1991), the concept of scene has become crucial to understandings of metal/hardcore music culture. Along with style, scene has most often been employed to connect abstract notions of genre to the literal physical world. Whereas style allows us to cite concrete examples in artefacts of various media as aspects of a larger genre construct, scene tends to focus on the people and institutions involved in creating and ascribing meaning to those artefacts. Scene appears frequently in metal/hardcore literature of all stripes, from academic ethnography (Haenfler 2006) to journalistic articles ranking the 'Top 10 Metal Scenes in America' (Ringo 2013b). However, as with genre and style, notions of scene differ from one author to another. This section is thus intended to provide an overview of the use of scene in studies of popular music generally, including competing terminology, before explicating the various concepts of scene prevalent in metal/hardcore writing. I note the significance of multiple scene types and focuses, before considering how scenes interact with one another. To account for the multiplicity and decentralised nature of the scene construct, I suggest that scenes function rhizomatically.

Subculture, Tribe, Scene

While 'scene' has become the most common term used in conjunction with metal/hardcore in academia, there has been some competition. Early studies of youth culture made use of the term 'subculture', with scene introduced later as an alternative, and, later still, 'tribe' was proffered as an alternate term. Ostensibly, these three terms all refer to the same thing – the people and institutions involved in creating and maintaining a form of music culture – but various connotations and nuances of meaning have evolved over time. Emerging from the CCCS,[199] subculture became a central notion within the burgeoning cultural studies field. Famously appearing in the title of an influential text by Hebdige (1979), subculture has been widely used in sociology,

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[199] See chapter one (pp. 16-17).

anthropology, and musicology (to name only a few). In its simplest form, subculture affords the existence of distinct cultures that vary in their capacity for self-sufficiency but are nonetheless identifiable as different in some way from one another. However, by virtue of the added prefix, subculture connotes an entity that is subordinate in some way to the dominant culture. This hegemonic model, prevalent in CCCS-derived cultural studies, positions subcultures as deviant and, commonly, resistant to 'the mainstream' (however that is understood). Susan Willis notes that '[t]he cornerstone of British subculture analysis is class, and the privileged site for understanding the practice and formation of subcultures is the working class' (1993, p. 375), casting subculture as an inherently political entity. Subculture, then, might be understood to refer to a smaller, relatively specific grouping of people and institutions bound together through a resistance to popular culture. Indeed, the notion of subculture suggests that participants enjoy a degree of autonomy from dominant modes of cultural production. As Willis demonstrates, subculture has fallen out of favour with many in the world of cultural studies, partly because of an overt connection with those early Birmingham School theorists, and partly because of the stability and even stasis implied by the term.

Drawing on previous research (Gelder & Thornton 1997), Richard A. Peterson and Andy Bennett prefer scene to subculture 'because the latter term presumes that a society has one commonly shared culture from which the subculture is deviant. […] In addition, we avoid "subculture" because it presumes that all of a participant's actions are governed by subcultural standards' (2004, p. 3). Within 'a late-modern context in which identities are increasingly fluid and interchangeable' (p. 3), the concept of subculture appears needlessly fixed and, in this sense, limited. David Hesmondhalgh can find support for his observation that 'it is common for [scene] to be talked about among popular music academics as a term that has replaced subcultures as the key way in which musical collectivities are conceived' (2005, p. 22) in volumes like *The Post-subcultures Reader* (Muggleton & Weinzierl 2003) and *After Subculture* (Bennett & Kahn-Harris 2004). Despite this trend, subculture has found use in academic metal/hardcore literature (Wood 1999; Roccor 2000), sometimes in

tandem with scene (Mueller 2011), though Brown has argued that traditional subcultural theory is ill-equipped to deal with metal music (2003).

After the concept of scene had been introduced and developed in popular music studies during the early-to-mid 1990s, partly to function in addition to subculture, partly to replace it, Andy Bennett presented another term to the popular music culture lexicon. 'Drawing upon [Michel] Maffesoli's (1996) concept of *tribus* (tribe)' Bennett argues that 'those groupings that have been theorised as coherent subcultures are better understood as a series of temporal gatherings characterised by fluid boundaries and floating memberships' (1999, pp. 599-600). Addressing directly the issue of subcultural fixity, Bennett's 'neo-tribes' attempts to encapsulate 'the unstable and shifting cultural affiliations which characterise late modern consumer-based societies' (1999, p. 605).[200] This focus on relative instability forms the basis of Hesmondhalgh's criticism of neo-tribes: '[t]he CCCS subculturalists might have overestimated the boundedness and permanence of the group identities they were studying, but simply to offer instability and temporariness as alternatives does not get us very far' (2005, p. 24). In Bennett's neo-tribes the internal power struggles within a subcultural infrastructure are renegotiated, moving the power of influence from institutions to people. In other words, while subcultures seem to privilege the structure of subordinate cultures that seem to function apart from the dominant popular culture, neo-tribes foreground the power of the individual to move from one subset of culture to another, navigating various identities at will.

At something of a midpoint between subculture and neo-tribe, scene can be understood to balance the influence of people and institutions while simultaneously drawing attention to the impact of place on music cultures. Although scene may have 'originated in the theatre, denoting the space within which action is performed' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 15), in music it was 'first widely used by journalists in the 1940s to characterize the marginal and bohemian ways of life of those associated with the demiworld of jazz' (Peterson & Bennett

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[200] Bennett here borrows 'neo-tribe' from Kevin Hetherington (1992), but has subsequently used tribe and neo-tribe interchangeably (e.g. Hesmondhalgh 2005).

2004, p. 2). Given this etymology it is unsurprising that scene often connotes action related to making music directly and indirectly. More overt, however, is scene's connotations of space and place. Indeed, the notion of 'cultural space' is essential to Will Straw's classic definition of scene as 'that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization' (Straw 1991, p. 373). While many theorists have developed the concept in relation to notions of location and locality (a thread to which I return later), the specifics of place are not essential to a theory of scene, but merely to models of a particular scene.

Pepper G. Glass raises the idea of 'doing scene' focusing on 'how participants constructed and sustained a scene through interaction with each other, mostly by manipulating its spatial building blocks' (Glass 2012, p. 699). This perspective, while not denying the influence of place on the identity of a scene, accounts for the vast array of different scenes around the world by recognising that 'instead of being a location that is found and used, participants actively create and maintain scene spaces through shared activity' (Glass 2012, p. 712). If subculture might be understood to impose a top-down power structure upon participants, and neo-tribe can be construed to separate people and institutions, scene resituates participants and institutions in relation to one another and in relation to space. Per Glass, this relationship must be understood as dynamic and active: scene is not merely a space in which things happen, it is the very happenings within, to, and of that space.

Conceptualisations of scene vary considerably in different disciplinary fields, not to mention the disparate ways in which it is understood in non-academic discourse in multiple music cultures. This variety of usage has resulted in authors qualifying the intended scope of any use of scene, referring variously to global, regional, national, or local scenes, as well as less obvious scene types like translocal or virtual. Alongside spatial referents, scenes may be circumscribed by genre, timeframe, or even ideology. The rest of my discussion on scene is thus intended to elucidate those different types of scene (to use Peterson and Bennett's [2004] term) commonly used in cultural studies,

sociology, and anthropology, before discussing various scales of scene (Kahn-Harris's [2007] term) found in literature on metal/hardcore. Instead of considering these different concepts of scene as conflicting or even confusing, I offer a framework for understanding scenes in relation to one another.

Types of Scene

Since one 'advantage of scene is that it locates musical practices in specific spatial and temporal locations' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 19), it follows that the analyst must circumscribe the spatial and temporal dimensions of the scene under analysis. To this end, authors in cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, and musicology have coined various terms to specify the scope of music scenes. Peterson and Bennett 'define three general types of scenes' (2004, p. 6) – local, translocal, and virtual – while Haenfler acknowledges 'local, national, global, and virtual scenes' (2015, p. 278). Kahn-Harris recognises local and global scenes (2007), whereas for Wallach and Levine scene 'is used to refer to local, national and global entities' (2013, p. 118). With the exception of somewhat esoteric scenic analyses like Glass's study of what we might call a micro scene (2012), one can identify four scene types that are most prevalent in studies of scene: (1) local, (2) translocal, (3) global, and (4) virtual.

<u>Local</u>

Perhaps the most easily understood scene variant, a local scene 'corresponds most closely with the original notion of a scene as clustered around a specific geographic focus' (Peterson & Bennett 2004, p. 6). A local scene, then, is usually relatively small, including a limited amount of participants (bands, concert-goers, promoters, venue owners, etc.) and institutions (venues, record shops, etc.), arranged around a particular area (a town, city, state, or county). Crucially, while local scenes delineate a specific place, they can also be interpreted as demarcating aspects of identity. Since '[l]ocal scenes exist in specific geographical areas, include face-to-face interaction, and reflect local concerns, culture, and political ideas' (Haenfler 2015, p. 286), claims of scene affiliation are always more than simply stating from where a band originates. Peterson and Bennett recognise local scenes as including aspects of place as

well as a form of collective identity: 'clusters of producers, musicians, and fans realize their common musical taste, collectively distinguishing themselves from others by using music and cultural signs often appropriated from other places, but recombined and developed in ways that come to represent the local scene' (2004, p. 8). This second function of local scenes, in which a scene based in a specific locale may connote something about the way in which the music is played and understood, affords the high levels of differentiation evident in any form of popular music. It is not simply that death metal scenes in Akron, Ohio and in Bali offer examples of death metal being played and enjoyed in different places; rather, the death metal scene in Akron is different from the death metal scene in Bali, with different artists composing different styles of death metal, different performance practices, different modes of production, and different people consuming the music (see Berger 1999; and Baulch 2007). As an analytical tool, an obvious advantage of conceptualising a local scene is 'that it locates activities in networks of people who are in actual times and places' (Glass 2012, p. 698), making the abstract concrete and circumscribing the extent of any ethnographic work – indeed, analyses of local scenes commonly utilise ethnographic methodologies (Berger 1999).

Translocal

Rather than consider local scenes as isolated instances of people making a certain kind of music in a certain place, more recent notions of scenes have taken into consideration the ways in which local scenes may be understood in relation to one another. Put simply, 'local music scenes that focus on a particular kind of music are in regular contact with similar local scenes in distant places' (Peterson & Bennett 2004, p. 8), thereby constituting translocal scenes: networks of related local scenes. Often, the unifying feature of such translocal scenes is genre – the grindcore scene in Melbourne is related to the grindcore scene in Osaka by way of a shared genre focus. Past this nominal relation, though, more concrete relationships may exist whereby bands from one scene tour in another with participants acting as hosts for the visiting artists (Overell 2014, pp. 119-126). These kind of translocal networks 'foster abstract and concrete connections' (Haenfler 2015, p. 286) between local scenes of varying

size, ensuring that local scenes avoid becoming too insular to be productive. While local scenes offer participants a way to make and enjoy music 'their way', without some form of outside influence a scene may easily become stagnant with the same people performing in the same venues to the same audiences time and again.

During the 1980s and '90s, informal tape trading networks afforded the spread of recordings from one locale to another, across both national and genre boundaries. Through tape trading, a participant of the nascent grindcore scene in Birmingham, UK like Napalm Death's Shane Embury could acquire recordings of Californian death metal bands (Mudrian 2004, p. 38). In this way, participants in a variety of local scenes 'interact with each other through the exchange of recordings, bands, fans, and fanzines' (Peterson & Bennett 2004, p. 8), spreading the products of their scene beyond local boundaries. Although it is tempting to read such translocality as diluting a scene's localness in some way, '[s]ome scenes actively nurture a sense of localism, yet they are infused with translocal connections' (Haenfler 2015, p. 286). Some artists and record labels are heavily associated with a specific local scene, including prominent mentions of the scene from which they developed in song titles and lyrics (e.g. 'Stand Up NY' from Madball's *Infiltrate the System*, 2007) or on merchandise. Despite these scenes promoting themselves as intrinsically linked to specific localities, the availability of scenic artefacts around the world might suggest something more than individual scenes linked together.

Global

While translocal scenes may be understood as networks of interconnected local scenes, the notion of global scenes offers a subtle shift of focus and of scale. Global scenes foreground the interrelation between instances of music cultures around the world, casting local scenes not as independent but as co-dependent. As various metal/hardcore texts contend (Kahn-Harris 2007; Wallach et al. 2011b), a view of the music culture as global does little to diminish the variety of metal genres and styles, and, in fact, may be understood as combating a view of metal/hardcore as homogeneous by emphasising that

death metal in Sweden is related to death metal in America.[201] Peterson and Bennett claim that the notion of scene 'has been frequently employed in journalistic accounts […] to suggest that there are locally situated pockets of grassroots musical creativity distinct from global mainstream music styles' (2004, p. 8). These authors consider scenes (local, translocal, or virtual, to use their examples) as spaces separate from the mainstream in which various music cultures can grow, functioning primarily outside mainstream markets. However, for Kahn-Harris, such a view may be understood as diminishing the significance of, in this case, metal music, or simply as not recognising the sheer volume of people involved in metal music around the world. Writing as Harris (2000), Kahn-Harris seems to conceptualise metal as global owing to the vast networks of communication between metal participants all over the world such that scenes in myriad locations function as appendages to the global body of metal music culture, as integral to that global music culture as one another and as any other specific locale. There is an extent to which Kahn-Harris's reading of metal music as a global scene implies something of an 'alternative mainstream' (Kärjä 2006), separate from 'the mainstream' but nevertheless encompassing a similar territory.

Conceptions of metal/hardcore as a global scene rely upon a notion of shared ideology and experience such that participants are 'connected via shared values, styles, music, and subcultural practices instead of regular face-to-face contact' (Haenfler 2015, p. 286). Wallach et al. contend that '[d]espite significant differences across national and regional metal scenes, […] *all* metalheads, regardless of their preferred subgenre or subgenres, view metal as the opposite of light entertainment. To them, it is a form of serious music that endorses a particular set of values' (2011a, p. 8; original emphasis), and assert that '[a]ffective overdrive is the common denominator in most of the world's heavy metal scenes' (p. 13). In this way, we might regard metal/hardcore as a global scene bounded together by more than just similar musical styles; its participants conceive metal/hardcore as a global music culture. Haenfler adopts

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[201] Relationships between global and local rap scenes are explored by Krims (2000, pp. 158-197).

'glocalization' as offering a way to balance the different scales of reference implied by translocal and global, emphasising that '[e]verything ostensibly local is connected to the global, and everything global is lived in the local' (2015, p. 290). With the ever-expanding reach of the internet allowing people from all over the world to communicate with one other, to share audio and video recordings, and to explore what metal/hardcore might mean to someone from a different culture, discussing a local scene without reference to the global scene is increasingly untenable.

Virtual

A more obviously modern conception than other scene types, virtual scenes are those that exist primarily in the digital realm. At its most basic level, a virtual scene replaces the physical spaces of a local scene with digital equivalents (Peterson & Bennett 2004, pp. 10-12). Rather than meet in person at a venue or a bar, participants enter dialogues in forums and comment threads; instead of sending bootleg tapes to one another in the post, participants can upload audio and video recordings to myriad websites for others to enjoy. In comparing modes of interaction in virtual scenes to their physical counterparts, it becomes evident that virtual scenes allow for an extension of material practices (Bennett & Rogers 2016, p. 141). Some virtual scene members 'interact primarily online, with relatively little face-to-face contact, while for others the virtual scene complements their local and translocal interactions' (Haenfler 2015, p. 286) by removing boundaries of distance and, often, cost. For the most part, then, virtual scenes may be understood in conjunction with local, translocal, or global scenes that are based more firmly in physical reality. A once little-known local scene in an area of the world without much tourism or media attention (at least in relation to that music) might be able to spread music by local bands virtually. Haenfler suggests that Washington, DC's 'local and translocal connections […] grew virtually with the expansion of the internet and continue globally' (2015, p. 287), such that punk and hardcore bands from the city are known around the world. In this case, a local scene was firmly established before the advent of widespread internet use, thus the virtual scene might be considered supplementary. In more recent situations, however, online interaction has

proven foundational in establishing new subgenres.

Djent began on online messageboards, with amateur musicians from around the world composing and recording their own music before allowing other forum members to hear it and offer feedback. For many, 'djent is an online phenomenon' (Laing 2011), a 'scene started in chat rooms, forums and home studios. This made it easy for many like minded people to find each other, something which would have been impossible without the internet' (Kahney 2010). Prominent djent musicians like Misha Mansoor of Periphery and Alec 'Acle' Kahney of Tesseract communicated and collaborated on projects despite being based on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean (Laing 2011). Originally a one-man project founded by Keshav Dhar and based in Delhi, Skyharbor's debut album *Blinding White Noise: Illusion and Chaos* (2012) includes vocals by UK-based Daniel Tompkins and guest guitar solos by Japan-based Marty Friedman, both of whom had initially contacted Dhar online requesting to be part of the project (Unni 2011). Following the album's release, Dhar recruited musicians to form a full band and began touring India and further afield. Though Skyharbor might not be described as djent stylistically, 'Keshav [Dhar] originally started out lurking on the same online forums where the likes of Acle Kahney (Tesseract) and Misha "Bulb" Mansoor (Periphery) cut their djent riffing teeth' (Metal Hammer 2012b, p. 14), suggesting that a virtual scene may produce musical diversity in much the same way as a physical scene.

Examples like Skyharbor and the djent subgenre more broadly reverse the conventional flow between local and virtual scenes. Whereas participants in local (that is, physical) scenes have utilised online technologies to communicate and share music with those outside their physical locale, enlarging the scene virtually, in the case of djent it was a 'virtual place of music community' (Kibby 2000, p. 93) that produced, consumed, and disseminated music that later became physical and had a direct impact on local and translocal scenes. Since 'the release of the debut album by Misha [Mansoor's] band Periphery [*Periphery*, 2010] has dragged djent from the virtual world into the real one' (Thomson 2011), more conventional physical scenes have emerged around the world. Given that a 'key unique factor that set this community / scene

/ then-to-be-genre apart from others is that it had no geographical base' (Kahney 2010), virtual scenes cannot be understood as local in a physical sense. Becoming well known online provided bands like Periphery and Tesseract with a global following before they had ever toured (Laing 2011); however, 'one major disadvantage of this global community' (Kahney 2010) is the difficulty in physically performing with people scattered in various countries.

Despite niche virtual scenes including fewer participants and institutions (webzines, blogs, YouTube channels, etc.) than larger more mainstream virtual scenes, their digital existence negates geographic constraints. Unlike physical scenes that rely upon institutions like concert venues and record shops, as well as corresponding patrons, members of virtual scenes may take advantage of free or relatively inexpensive technologies. A virtual scene participant can read online blogs and participate in group discussions on forums for free, s/he can stream recordings on Bandcamp or Soundcloud and watch videos on YouTube for free, and insofar as one can experience a virtual scene from the comfort of one's own home, there is a smaller time cost. As a result of this infrastructure being largely created and maintained by participants 'to a far greater extent than in other kinds of scenes, virtual scenes are devoted to the needs and interests of fans' (Peterson & Bennett 2004, p. 11).

Niche Scene Types

Alongside these more widely recognised scene types, some authors utilise related but distinct terminology when referring to scenes. Theorising the link between local and global scenes of a given genre, Peterson and Bennett note that Mark Slobin 'uses the concept of transregionalism to illustrate how such innovation emerges simultaneously in disparate local scenes across the world' (Peterson & Bennett 2004, p. 9).[202] The notion of transregionalism may be understood as falling between local and global in terms of scope, having participants in multiple regions but without being known on a properly global scale. Weinstein asserts that '[m]etal is transcultural, not cross-cultural. In other words, metal is not a music tied to a particular culture, which people in other

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[202] Referring to the use of transregionalism in Slobin (1993).

cultures happen to enjoy as outsiders; rather, metal is the music of a group of people that transcends other, preexisting cultural and national boundaries' (2011, p. 46). This dovetails with the claim that 'musicians and fans around the world align themselves with a transnational metal community' (Wallach et al. 2011a, p. 7). In considering metal as transcultural or transnational, these scholars position metal as the central organising element of these communities; that is, metal scenes are understood as similar, if not the same, around the world regardless of other demographic, geographic, or cultural concerns.

In contrast to a view in which specific people and institutions in a particular place create their own version of a music culture, Weinstein (2011) and Wallach et al. (2011a) suggest that metal might be imported wholesale. In other words, as an extant culture metal/hardcore provides the impetus for people to create their own small-scale scenes espousing the values supposedly shared by other participants around the world. Glass's (2012) study of 'doing scene' focuses on a highly specific punk scene centred on a single building in a Midwestern (US) college town. His description of residents of the 'Pirate House' (p. 700) creating and sustaining a space that functioned variously as a venue for punk shows, occasional accommodation for scene participants, and area for general gatherings, might be described as a study of a micro scene. Glass observes that '[p]articipants at the Pirate House used, contributed to, interacted with, and at times competed with these local, extralocal, and virtual social worlds' (2012, p. 702), casting the micro scene as related but nonetheless distinct from larger scenic constructs.

Metal and Hardcore Scenes
While the notion of scene is far from unique to metal/hardcore discourse, the prevalence of scene in this literature is nonetheless remarkable. Scene and related ideas are central to numerous academic texts on metal/hardcore (e.g. Berger 1999b; Haenfler 2006; Kahn-Harris 2007; Wallach & Levine 2013), as well as journalistic monographs (Mudrian 2004; Ekeroth 2008; Blush 2010; Rettman 2014). Metal/hardcore websites have produced various series of 'scene reports', informing the reader/viewer about a scene's history (Noisey

2014), the significance of a particular venue (Stosuy 2013) or participant demographic (Alva 2014), and highlighting newer, little-known artists in a given scene (Mullett 2016). The near ubiquity of scene in written metal/hardcore discourse may be understood as a reflection of language used by participants in everyday conversations.[203] While casual discussions of where a band are from might not constitute the kind of scene-theorising found in academia, seemingly common associations between certain genres, places, and times are nevertheless familiar to many metal/hardcore participants. Typical examples of scenic associations include hardcore in Washington, DC and New York during the 1980s, thrash metal in California during the mid-to-late 1980s, (the second wave of) black metal in Norway during the early 1990s, death metal in Sweden and Florida (respectively) during the same time period, and metalcore in New England during the early years of the twenty-first century. That these cases are well-known to regular participants and significant to academic scholars alike suggests a framework of scene-association is particularly applicable to metal/hardcore.

However, 'the fact that scene is a vernacular term, used by musical participants […] can actually be a disadvantage, if such uses create further confusion around an already overly polysemic word' (Hesmondhalgh 2005, p. 29). Indeed, referring to a certain artist as part of a specific scene can be confusing if the identity of the artist and/or scene changes at some point in the future, unless one then includes the qualifier of timeframe into the scene claim. As with terms like genre and style, scene becomes unclear when apparent stability becomes unstable. Cannibal Corpse were formed in Buffalo, New York, but beginning with debut album *Eaten Back to Life* (1990) they recorded six albums at Morrisound Recording in Tampa, Florida. An association between the band and studio developed, and Cannibal Corpse became known as part of the Florida death metal scene, alongside bands like Obituary and Morbid Angel, (Blum 2013; Cridlin 2013). At one time, the relationship between the band and the scene was based purely on their preferred producer and recording studio (Scott

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[203] Matsue considers scene 'the most appropriate term' for her ethnography 'precisely because it was a common referent among participants' (2009, p. 40).

Burns at Morrisound Recording), but, spending so much time recording in Tampa when not touring, the band members eventually moved to the Florida city.[204] Given these events, are Cannibal Corpse part of the Buffalo scene or the Tampa scene, or both?

In such instances it is useful to attempt to pin down the nature of 'scene' in the scene claim. Noting the various ways in which one might conceive of scene, Wallach and Levine concede that a 'lack of precision – using the same term to refer to vastly different scales of organization – is, we believe, highly unfortunate for scholarship, but we also believe it is quixotic at this point to expect to stamp it out' (2013, p. 118). Whereas Hesmondhalgh prefers to avoid discussion of music scenes because of potential confusion, metal/hardcore scholars largely accept its popularity in vernacular discourse and find it a useful concept for focusing academic analyses.

> [I]t is precisely the ambiguity of the concept [of scene] that allows for it to be tailored to the specific conditions of the phenomenon to which it applies. The concept of scene allows researchers to produce work that is empirically grounded in specific contexts yet is open to connections with other pieces of research and to everyday language (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 21).

Kahn-Harris's text 'develop[s] the concept of "scene" as the framework for the analysis of extreme metal music and culture' (2007, p. 7), and the focus on the extreme metal scene is such that five out of eight chapter titles include the term 'scene'. His use of the term is deliberately heterogeneous, in part to reflect its usage among participants and more explicitly because this use of 'the scene concept facilitates the spatiality and holism that I have argued a study of extreme metal music and culture requires' (2007, p. 21). Drawing on his own previous ethnographic work, he observes that scene 'is used in a variety of ways to describe the context within which extreme metal music, practices and discourses are produced' (2007, p. 13), referring variously to aspects of geography, temporality, genre, style, or ideology. This leads Kahn-Harris to 'make the initial assertion that *all* musical and music-related activity takes place

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[204] The members of Cannibal Corpse discuss relocating from Buffalo, NY to Tampa, FL during the documentary included on disc one of *Centuries of Torment* (2008; 1:33:29-1:34:24).

within a scene or scenes. By asserting that everything takes place within a scene, the question "is this a scene?" becomes redundant' (2007, p. 21; original emphasis), thereby grounding any discussion of a genre, style, artist, or album within a broader scenic framework. Such an approach constructs 'an inclusive scene' wherein '[o]ne cannot make a rigid distinction between "active" and "passive" membership' (p. 22), somewhat democratising participation. Expanding on the work of Berger (1999b), Kahn-Harris proposes that we 'treat *all* scenic experiences as musical experiences of some kind. […] This definition allows us to consider fully the experiential role of the huge number of institutions and practices, such as tape trading, record labels, concerts, bands, websites, etc., which exist within the scene' (2007, pp. 54-55; original emphasis). A music scene's 'principal institutions' (p. 78) are considered as essential elements within the scenic construct, each understood in relation to some form of participation.[205]

Since '[m]uch of the existing literature in metal studies contains an implicit theory of scene formation' (Wallach & Levine 2013, p. 117), Wallach and Levine's work is based on drawing out explicit notions of scene formation. The authors 'regard metal scenes as *loosely bounded functional units* containing a finite number of participants at any one time' (2013, p. 118; original emphasis) that perform at least two functions and conform to at least one generalisation outlined thus:

> We contend that metal scenes perform four crucial functions in the following order of chronology and priority:
> 1. They act as *conduits* to the global circulation of metal sounds and styles.
> 2. They provide gathering places for the *collective consumption* of metal artifacts and the display of metal-related fashion and expertise.
> 3. They provide *sites for local performance and artifactual production*. At this point some interaction with the larger economic order of society becomes unavoidable, and *scenic institutions* become vital.

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[205] The full list of principal institutions comprising a scene's 'infrastructure' are given thus: 'Writing and Trading', 'Distribution Networks', 'Record Companies', 'Bands and Musicians', 'Gigs and Gig Promotion', 'Magazines, Fanzines and Promotion', and the internet (Kahn-Harris 2007, pp. 78-94).

4. They *promote local artists* to the larger network of scenes. These promotional aims are not usually oriented towards commercial interests and are rarely focused on one single, exceptional band (Wallach & Levine 2013, pp. 118-119; original emphases).

Wallach and Levine's generalisations on metal scenes:

1. 'All metal scenes begin with sites for the collective consumption of extralocal artifacts'.
2. 'Metal scenes are dependent on institutions for their survival'.
3. 'Metal scenes are populated by musical "amateurs"'.
4. 'Metal scenes often make a show of patrolling their boundaries, but differ from other scenes in the intensity and function of this patrolling'.
5. 'In order for a scene to have coherence through time, there must be a "generation gap": there must be an older generation aging out of and younger members entering the scene'.
6. 'All metal scenes are defined not just by their relationship to the global metal scene but by their relationship to other neighbouring scenes and to overlapping scenes dedicated to other genres' (2013, pp. 119-127).

For Wallach and Levine, metal scenes as 'social formations' (2013, p. 119) function primarily as a way in which a large, global metal culture might be understood and consumed in smaller, more manageable pieces. Such a definition of scene is predicated on the notion that every scale of scene, from the micro to the local to the global, is inherently connected. That Wallach and Levine prioritise this function above others suggests a conscious decision to conceptualise scene as both a literal physical grouping of people and institutions, and as a figurative assemblage of certain aspects of a larger genre construct. On the one hand, scene refers to specific people in specific places making specific forms of music in the real world, while on the other hand, scene refers to an amorphous constellation of artefacts, people, and ideologies that serves to delimit certain aspects of genre. The rest of Wallach and Levine's functions are more firmly rooted in the literal, relating to space, people, and institutions. Their generalisations follow a similar format whereby most regard conceptions of a physical scene, but the final generalisation again speaks to both physical and figurative constructs. A conception of scene as relative appears particularly significant to Wallach and Levine, with three of four functions (numbers 1, 3, and 4) and three of six generalisations (1, 4, 5, and 6) commenting upon the relationship between the scene in question and

something outside, including other scenes. The authors essentially discuss two types of metal scene – local and global – but they also mention a metal scene's relationship 'to overlapping scenes dedicated to other genres' (Wallach & Levine 2013, p. 127), suggesting that the borders of a metal scene may be permeable.

How, then, are we to conceive of scene in metal/hardcore discourse? Following Wallach and Levine, one might codify scenes as focused upon genre, with a global metal scene including, but not comprising, smaller local scenes. But this notion of scene is incommensurate (on the surface, at least) with Kahn-Harris's (2007) outlining of the global extreme metal scene, centred around certain metal genres but excluding others. It may be that the broader global metal scene subsumes the extreme metal scene, but extreme metal participants who sing the praises of the underground, for instance, claim they want nothing to do with other metal genres or a more inclusive scene. If we base our understanding of scene on genre, does that disqualify institutions that cater to genres other than metal? If based on a specific place during a specific time period, does that scene have a finite existence? Scenes may be expressed as conflating geography and genre (New York hardcore) or time and genre ('90s death metal), as highly specific (mid-'80s Birmingham grindcore) or somewhat general (Scandinavian black metal), referring to a 'sound' (Gothenburg sound) or relative to the genre in question (second wave black metal). Kahn-Harris suggests that scenes 'are both discursively and institutionally reproduced along two different kinds of scale' (2007, p. 99), place-based and genre-based. Building on this framework, I propose three scenic focuses: time/place, genre, and ideology.

Time/Place-Focused

As outlined in the previous section, a focus on place is often inherent in conceptions of scene. Reflecting uses of scene outside metal/hardcore studies, Kahn-Harris observes that scenes are 'reproduced globally, regionally, nationally and locally' (2007, p. 99). This focus on place – or, as Kahn-Harris prefers, 'place-based scale' (p. 99) – is broadly similar to ideas of scene types

explored above. Significantly, Kahn-Harris's foregrounding of the global might suggest an understanding of place-focused scenes as operating hierarchically, from the global to the local. By contrast, Haenfler's discussion of scene as based on 'geographical location' includes 'cities (for instance the "Boston scene," the "Salt Lake City scene," or the "Louisville scene"), states ("California scene"), regions ("West Coast scene"), countries ("U.S. scene"), or the world (the worldwide punk scene)' (2006, p. 22). This local to global perspective, not to mention a more detailed outline of scene types, speaks to the different ways in which place-focused scenes can be understood. In the abstract, Kahn-Harris's and Haenfler's viewpoints are as effective as one another; however, given that Kahn-Harris's research is concentrated on extreme metal and Haenfler's on hardcore, the differing ways in which the authors consider scene is significant.

While both authors recognise the prevalence of scenes constructed around some conception of place, neither acknowledge the related element of time. Discussions of particular geographic scenes commonly refer to specific timeframes during which that scene was understood to have been particularly influential. Tony Rettman (2014) chronicles New York hardcore 1980-1990, while Bri Hurley (2011) narrows the scope to 1985-88, reinforcing a view of New York during the 1980s as important to the development of hardcore (Haenfler 2006; Blush 2010). Mudrian (2004) utilises time/place-focused scenes in his histories of grindcore (1980s UK), death metal (mid-to-late 1980s US, late 1980s Sweden), and black metal (late 1980s Norway). It is not that these scenes ceased to exist after the given timeframes, nor that these locations were the only places that this music happened; rather, time/place-focused scenes serve to ground the authors' discussion in relation to larger notions of genre.

Genre-Focused

Alongside a focus on time/place, scenes 'are also reproduced on a genre-based scale. […] One can talk of separate death metal, black metal and doom metal scenes. Within them are a constantly shifting set of other scenes such as gore metal, gothic metal and so on' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 99). Indeed, scene

'signifies a specific genre of music; within the larger punk scene exist many subgroups: the "indie rock," "pop-punk," and "crust" scenes, for example' (Haenfler 2006, p. 22). Related to the different genres under discussion, Kahn-Harris identifies time/place-focused scenes before genre-focused, while Haenfler reverses this order. With time/place as the primary dimension, a given scene may be understood to include multiple genres and styles: though Kahn-Harris identifies distinct genres within extreme metal, scenes are apparently demarcated more strongly through aspects of geography. Although participants may share the same institutions and scene spaces, Haenfler's decision to position genre as the principal organising factor for scenes may indicate more stringent boundaries between genres within the broader punk and hardcore umbrella.

Of particular interest to the present study, however, is the combination of scenes with ostensibly different focuses: '[g]eneric and place-based scenes cross cut and coincide in complex ways. The global extreme metal scene itself represents a scene that is both generically and geographically located. The same is true for some local scenes that have a particular generic speciality such as the Norwegian black metal scene' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 99). New York hardcore clearly refers to both a place and a genre, but, for many participants, this scene label also connotes aspects of style. Mehling cites New York hardcore in a stylistic context in his review of *Proprioception* (2010) by deathcore band And Hell Followed With, noting the inclusion of 'some straight-up fucking NYHC, even with thuggish gang vocals' and difficulty in attempting to 'figure out if they actually stole that part from a Madball record' (Mehling 2010, p. 76). Here, New York hardcore functions as something more akin to a style ('gang vocals' being a compositional device), but in describing this device as 'thuggish' Mehling alludes to the fact that 'some hardcore bands earn a reputation for attracting tough guys who dance hard and fight; the Cro-Mags, Madball, and Hatebreed were a few notable examples' (Haenfler 2006, p. 128). New York hardcore, then, might refer to conceptions of scene, style, genre, or any combination of the three ideas.

The use of scene terminology when referring to something other than a literal, physical scene is not limited to hardcore: 'since the early 1990s there has been an increased tendency to "localize" extreme metal sounds. Scene members talk of the distinctiveness of the Gothenburg death metal sound, for example' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 99). Indeed, the use of terms like 'Gothenburg sound' or 'Stockholm sound' have become common labels for both artists and artefacts from those scenes as well as for artefacts from elsewhere.[206] Whereas the Gothenburg scene denotes a specific city (and connotes a specific timeframe, the early 1990s), describing something as the Gothenburg sound denotes a particular combination of compositional devices and performance-related elements that are understood to have emerged from the Gothenburg scene, but have been used extensively outside that scene. In describing Californian band Nails's *Abandon All Life* (2013) as 'channeling old-school hardcore via the Stockholm Sound' (Rhombus 2013), the author references the 'fat guitars, growling vocals, relentless production, and bass heaviness' (Ekeroth 2008, p. 267) associated with the Swedish capital's death metal scene during the early 1990s. Slightly later, 'At the Gates kick-started the whole Gothenburg sound' (p. 269) with their albums *With Fear I Kiss the Burning Darkness* (1993) and *Terminal Spirit Disease* (1994), 'serving as inspiration for an entire wave of melodic metalcore bands during the 2000's [*sic*]' (Ekeroth 2008, pp. 275-276). In both examples, the 'sound' of a time/place- and genre-focused scene (compositional devices, performance techniques, production aesthetics) has been abstracted and transplanted to other places and genres while retaining some of its original identity via association.

Ideology-Focused

As well as scenes that focus on time/place and/or genre, some scenes focus primarily on notions of ideology. Two of the most prominent ideology-focused scenes in metal/hardcore are straight edge and Christian metal/hardcore. Unlike the scene focuses discussed above, ideology-focused scenes are rarely understood as limited to a specific place and time or to a single genre. Although

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[206] Krims observes a similar example in his discussion of 'Nederhop' (2000, pp. 162-177), a Dutch hip-hop genre born out of a local hip-hop scene in Amsterdam.

one can trace the beginning of straight edge to a specific scene (Washington, DC in the early 1980s), the ideology 'quickly spread across the United States' (Haenfler 2006, p. 9) and to other countries around the world (p. 10). And while '[s]traight edge remains nearly inseparable from the hardcore music scene' (p. 9), one can nonetheless identify straight edge bands (Earth Crisis, Have Heart, Throwdown), record labels (Revelation Records, Seventh Dagger Records), and websites (*Straight Edge Worldwide*).[207] By contrast, Christian metal/hardcore's 'transnational scene has developed its own highly independent, and largely Internet-based, scenic infrastructure of records labels, promotion and distribution channels, magazines, fanzines, webzines, online communities and discussion forums and festivals' (Moberg 2015, p. 100). Whereas straight edge bands are most often hardcore or metalcore, 'Christian metal comprises all metal sub-genres and styles' (p. 39) and Christian metal/hardcore has a more overt presence around the world.[208] Both straight edge and Christian metal/hardcore have their own scenic institutions, either broadly entwined with related genre-focused scenes (straight edge with hardcore) or Christian metal's 'own highly independent scenic infrastructure' (Moberg 2015, p. 90). Indeed, Christian metal/hardcore boasts dedicated record labels (Facedown Records, Tooth & Nails Records and its metal/hardcore imprint Solid State Records), promotion and distribution channels (Rugged Cross Music, Metal Mission), magazines and fanzines (*HM: The Hard Music Magazine*),[209] as well as webpages, online radio channels, and festivals and events (Moberg 2015, pp. 100-115).[210]

Despite the differences in scenic institutions, disparities between straight edge and non-straight edge bands are often slight. Likewise, 'although Christian metal constitutes a largely separate and independent metal scene, it should not be regarded as a separate metal sub-genre in the sense usually meant by that

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[207] http://www.straightedgeworldwide.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[208] Moberg cites Christian bands in no fewer than eight metal/hardcore genres (2015, pp. 37-39), and outlines Christian metal scenes on three continents (pp. 95-99).

[209] http://www.hmmagazine.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[210] It should be noted that these record labels and magazines do not deal with Christian artists exclusively, but are nevertheless commonly perceived as Christian institutions (and are listed as such by Moberg).

term' (Moberg 2015, p. 40). Ideology is thus the critical determining factor in straight edge and Christian metal/hardcore scenes. Generally speaking, the primary (perhaps only) distinction between a straight edge band and a non-straight edge counterpart is the promotion and/or application of specific values: '[t]he basic tenets of sXe [straight edge] are quite simple: members abstain, completely, from drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and usually reserve sexual activity for caring relationships, rejecting casual sex' (Haenfler 2006, p. 10). Moberg's criteria for a metal/hardcore artist being defined as Christian concern the themes (lyrics and imagery) prevalent in a band's work, the band members' lifestyles, and a band's record label.[211] He notes that a band may only need to fulfil two of these conditions in order to be perceived as a 'Christian band', but some artists receive the designation for less: '[t]heir name is taken from the Book of Revelation and yes, 7 Horns 7 Eyes are ostensibly a Christian band, but there is much more to their musical and lyrical philosophy than the usual blank-eyed proselytising that other likeminded bands often rely upon' (Metal Hammer 2012a, p. 14).[212] The author's barely concealed scorn for stereotypical elements of Christian metal/hardcore may explain the continued support for a distinct ideology-focused scene, but Christian metalcore bands like Underoath, As I Lay Dying, August Burns Red and The Devil Wears Prada have achieved commercial and critical success in both Christian and secular markets.

Insomuch as Christian and straight edge scenes define themselves apart from secular or non-straight edge metal/hardcore, these ideology-focused scenes experience self-imposed 'imagined marginality' (Glass 2012, p. 703).[213] After enjoying a period of relative prominence in the hardcore scene during the mid-to-late 1990s, in the early twenty-first century 'sXe once again receded into the

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[211] Moberg defines Christian metal/hardcore as 'metal that somehow conveys some form of Christian content or message' (2015, p. 41), 'metal that is made and produced by people who are themselves professed Christians and lead Christian lives' (p. 42), and 'metal that is produced and distributed through various Christian networks guided by "Christian principles" and an evangelistic agenda' (p. 42).

[212] 7 Horns 7 Eyes' only album to date, *Throes of Absolution* (2012), was released by secular label Basick Records.

[213] The subjects of Glass's ethnography constructed an 'imagined marginality' precisely because 'participants had the privilege to become marginal' (Glass 2012, p. 703). The topic of imagined marginality resurfaces in the discussion of mainstreams and undergrounds in chapter five.

margins of subcultural life' (Haenfler 2006, p. 17), and 'by forming its own separate and independent scene, Christian metal has so far remained confined to the very margins of the wider metal community' (Moberg 2015, p. 115). Despite participating (to an extent) in broader time/place- and/or genre-focused scenes, Christian and straight edge bands are also very much part of their own scenes focused on ideology first and foremost.

Scenic Interaction

Just as metal/hardcore genres may be properly understood only through their relationships to one another, an essential element of any theory of scene is that of scenic interaction.[214] While we can differentiate between various types of scene (global, local, etc.), as well as distinct scenic focuses, scenes cannot be conceived in isolation. Instead, scenes must always be understood as inherently relative, as connected to one another in various ways. Local scenes have long been connected to one another through informal tape trading networks and their dedicated members, not to mention artists playing gigs outside their local scene. Continuing widespread use of the internet has allowed for ever greater interaction between local scenes regardless of distances between them. Metal/hardcore participants frequently describe shared values and experiences as symptomatic of a wider community that encompasses both their specific local scene and others like it elsewhere. In more analytical terms, small local scenes may be understood as being subsumed by increasingly larger regional, national, and global scenes. The common thread in each of these formulations is a dynamic relationship between different scene types and focuses.

Put simply, tape trading was (and, for some, still is) the practice of sending cassette tapes between people anywhere a postal service can deliver. These recordings – often bootlegs – allowed fans of underground music in, say, Birmingham to hear music from New York or Stockholm. The essential nature of tape trading to the growth of metal/hardcore is strongly affirmed by

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[214] Indeed, Wallach and Levine's sixth generalisation about metal scenes (see above) contends that 'metal scenes are defined' (2013, p. 127) by their relationship to other scenes.

participants interviewed by Mudrian (2004) and Jason Netherton (2014), but also recognised in academic discourse. Indeed, the first of Kahn-Harris's 'principal institutions' of a music scene is 'Writing and Trading' (2007, p. 78), referring to letter writing and tape trading.

> The early [extreme metal] scene grew out of the global punk scene, which developed at the end of the 1970s, facilitated by fanzines such as *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll*. Such fanzines were set up with a global focus and contained addresses of scene member throughout the world and adverts from people wanting to correspond (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 78).

This form of artefactual exchange provides an obvious link between local scenes dispersed amongst separate countries or continents. 'Demo tapes, live tapes and rehearsal tapes were the predominant mode of transmission for extreme metal music. […] In the late 1980s some tapes would sell up to 2,000 copies, with tape trading resulting in an even wider circulation' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 78). Tape trading plays a prominent role in Mudrian's (2004) history of death metal and grindcore, with scene participants from the UK, multiple countries in mainland Europe, and various American states confirming the vital contribution of tape trading and letter writing. Nottingham's Heresy 'were definitely interested in getting faster like a lot of the US bands we were just listening to at that time, like Siege and Deep Wound' (drummer Steve Charlesworth in Mudrian 2004, p. 29). Then promoter and soon-to-be Earache Records founder Digby Pearson 'would always give [Heresy] the fastest hardcore band tape that I would trade at the time, and Steve would try to play faster than that' (in Mudrian 2004, p. 29). Artefactual exchange also moved in the opposite direction. Los Angeles-based Terrorizer guitarist 'Jesse [Pintado] ended up getting the Napalm Death demo that would become the A-side of *Scum,* [and] I remember one day he said, "Check this out." And when I listened to it the first time, I called him and said, "That's it—that's the way I wanna play"' (Terrorizer vocalist Oscar Garcia in Mudrian 2004, p. 60). Tape trading allowed a band from one side of the Atlantic Ocean to hear the latest extreme metal release from the other side, isolate a particular element of the recording they like (be it an aspect of composition, performance, recording, or even iconography) and incorporate it into their own music.

While tape trading networks provide an obvious link between scenic artefacts (scenic products), the combination of this artefactual exchange with letter writing also stimulated personal and artistic connections between scenes. The ability to hear bands from hundreds of miles away via bootleg demo tape was undoubtedly a fundamental element in the development of extreme metal (as well as punk and hardcore earlier). However, in attempting to be as fast or as heavy as artists from another scene, some band members became aware of the limitations of small, nascent local scenes. The resolution of this issue came partly in the form of letter writing that accompanied tape trading. When Morbid Angel found themselves in need of a drummer, vocalist/bassist David Vincent utilised a connection he had made while tape trading. Once 'Trey [Azagthoth, Morbid Angel guitarist] had gotten this Terrorizer demo through tape-trading' (David Vincent in Mudrian 2004, p. 85) and the members of Morbid Angel heard Pete Sandoval's impressive drumming, 'Vincent immediately approached Sandoval's Terrorizer bandmate Jesse Pintado, with whom he recently corresponded via tape-trading' (Mudrian 2004, p. 85), asking Pintado for his blessing to recruit Sandoval. Despite being part of separate local scenes – Terrorizer in Los Angeles, Morbid Angel in Charlotte, North Carolina – tape trading and letter writing fostered artistic connections between these participants resulting in a closer union of scenes (and, in this instance, genres).

Netherton (2014) highlights the personal element of these networks by making it the focus of the first story recounted in his book, in which Immolation vocalist/bassist Ross Dolan and guitarist Robert Vigna recall a trip to Europe in 1988. The New York-based band 'were writing to a lot of people over there, like the guys in Napalm Death in the U.K., Nihilist in Sweden, Laurent [Ramadier] from Listenable Records in France' (Dolan and Vigna in Netherton 2014, p. 13). Through connections they had made as tape traders, Immolation were able to visit the UK, France, and Sweden, meet with record label owners who were also part of the tape trading community (including Digby Pearson), arrange for Napalm Death to play their first gigs in the US, and jam with Nihilist in Stockholm (pp. 13-15). The underground death metal tape trading network thereby functioned as a direct artistic exchange among people as well as the

more overt artefactual exchange. In much the same way as later virtual scenes like djent afforded not only the communication of ideas musical and personal, tape trading networks engendered a sense of global community amongst scenic participants.

Benedict Anderson's classic notion of 'imagined community' (1983) seems fitting in this circumstance. Anderson posits a 'definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (1983, p. 6). Though Anderson's primary focus is the broad concept of nationalism, the idea of imagined community is apt for discussing metal/hardcore scenes. Even in small local scenes, the sheer variety of ways in which one can participate in a scene make it impossible to know one another personally, and therefore any bond must be imagined. Despite flexible membership parameters, scenes are distinct and distinctions between scenes are significant, while metal/hardcore scenes may be understood as sovereign from what participants perceive as mainstream popular culture. Lastly, the ideas of shared values and of relative democracy amongst participants can be found in many metal/hardcore scenes, and are especially prevalent in genre-focused scenes.

Scholars have not overlooked the applicability of Anderson's imagined community to metal/hardcore. Some have used the term in describing the global metal scene: '[t]he worldwide metal ecumene is an imagined community in Benedict Anderson's sense of the phrase' (Wallach et al. 2011a, p. 4); '[m]etal artists and fans […] lay claim to citizenship in an "imagined community"' (Weinstein 2011b, p. 46).[215] Karl Spracklen draws on both Anderson and Anthony Cohen (1985) for his conception of 'imaginary community': 'the imagined is one component of the imaginary, but not all of it. The ways in which the imaginary community of heavy metal might be constructed are equally to do with artifacts and language, as they are histories and myths' (Spracklen,

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[215] More recently, Catherine Hoad (2016) has explored imagined community in relation to extreme metal in Australia.

2016, p. 154).[216] Indeed, the exchange of artefacts and language (physically or digitally) allows various metal/hardcore scenes to interact with one another, broadening a sense of shared (imaginary) community.

A conception of metal/hardcore as community is prevalent in both academic and non-academic literature,[217] and, as intimated earlier, is often implicit in notions of scene. These kinds of observations are borne out in the views of various metal/hardcore participants who see the genre as more than music, fashion, or even ideology (Peterson 2009). Insomuch as metal/hardcore scenes can be understood as imaginary communities, as groupings of people centred upon (or, at least, pulled together by) scenic artefacts, institutions, and networks, the metal/hardcore genre functions as community, as a space to construct and experience collective identity (Haenfler 2006, pp. 71, 83-85). Roccor suggests that '[t]he kernel of heavy metal is not a special kind of ideology but rather the music of heavy metal. Everything else is subject to the momentary political, local, social and individual conditions within which this kind of music is made and consumed' (2000, p. 83). Thus, the notion of metal/hardcore as community may be understood to subsume the peculiarities of various scenes.

Upon first glance, models of scenic interaction can appear fairly simple: 'The extreme metal scene is a global music scene that contains local scenes within it. It also contains other scenes based on the production and consumption of particular forms of extreme metal genres, such as black metal and death metal' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 22). Local scenes exist as relatively small distinct entities that, when grouped together, may be described as national, regional, or even global. Likewise, subgenre-focused scenes can be grouped together to form larger genre-focused scenes. In other words, the relationship between scenes

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[216] Spracklen first theorised the imaginary community in his PhD thesis on rugby league (Spracklen 1996). Imaginary community has previously been applied to metal by Rosemary Lucy Hill (2014) as a framework for investigating the experience of female fans in metal/hardcore scenes.

[217] Most overtly in a special issue on metal in the *International Journal of Community Music* (7/2, 2014) and in the edited volume *Heavy Metal Music and the Communal Experience* (Varas-Díaz & Scott 2016).

is one of subsumption: local scenes subsumed by global, subgenre-focused subsumed by genre-focused.

> This superficially appears like a series of Russian dolls: the global scene, the European scene, the Swedish scene and the Gothenburg scene. But the situation is more complicated than this. For one thing, not every scene on every level discursively and institutionally replicates the other. The European scene has a much more allusive existence than the Swedish scene, for example. Furthermore, scenes cross-cut and overlap each other. One might talk of a Scandinavian scene or a Nordic scene as well as a Swedish scene (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 99).

Kahn-Harris's Russian doll model is implicit in much writing on music scenes, with the assumed relationship between local and global scenes being scale: the former's infrastructure is designed to cater to a limited amount of people and, in that sense, a particular demographic, while the latter espouses a broader approach attempting to serve many people in multiple locations. This is not to suggest that nuances become less pronounced as one moves from the local to the global, merely that specific circumstances of production and reception become dislocated. The imaginary community of a local scene is more tangible than that of a national, regional, or global scene. In this respect, as Kahn-Harris notes, differences between local and global scenes cannot be reduced to matters of scope.

The overlap with time/place-focused scenes is most stark when considering disparities in genre or ideology-focus. Aforementioned distinctions between death metal scenes in Stockholm and Gothenburg make notions of a Swedish scene less stable than they may first appear. Overt differences between death metal in Sweden and black metal in Norway expose the problematic nature of a superficially cohesive Scandinavian scene. From a generic standpoint, Norwegian black metal has more in common with black metal scenes in the US than the most prominent metal scene in its Nordic neighbour. A palpable issue with understanding metal/hardcore scenes in a Russian doll configuration is its inability to account for intersections of time/placed-focused and genre-focused scenes. Rather than each focus existing in its own nested model, artists and artefacts (and, indeed, participants) may be part of both a time/place-focused scene and a genre-focused scene simultaneously. Chimaira are part of the

Cleveland scene as well as being part of the metalcore scene, and these two scenic affiliations may appear reciprocal (in the case of a melodic death metal band from Gothenburg) or contradictory (in the case of a Stockholm band who do not play death metal). Moreover, simultaneous scene membership is not limited to artists – 'scene members are never entirely bound by their location in one particular scene' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 99) – but also includes the scenic status of artefacts. Like artists, a given album can circulate in more than one scene: Converge's *Jane Doe* (2001) is part of the mathcore scene and the metalcore scene.

An additional layer of convolution occurs when encountering artists who have changed genre/style over the course of their career. Comparing Bring Me the Horizon's first two label releases to more recent work shows drastic differences of style and genre. Artefacts like *This Is What the Edge of Your Seat Was Made For* (2004) and *Count Your Blessings* (2006) circulate as part of a different genre-focused scene than *Sempiternal* (2013) and *That's the Spirit* (2015), the former records part of a global deathcore scene while the latter within what we might call the mainstream metal scene. As artists, Bring Me the Horizon are most commonly affiliated with mainstream metal or rock, despite their earlier work remaining an element of the deathcore scene. Circa 2006, Bring Me the Horizon were part a global deathcore scene (and, more specifically, a British deathcore/metal scene), but over the course of ten years they seem to have moved from this scene to another, mainstream metal. For this reason, any understanding of metal/hardcore scenes must account for movement between scenes. Kahn-Harris identifies this aspect of scenic interaction, observing that scene '[m]embers produce extreme metal music and practice within a complexity of overlapping scenes within scenes, which allows – potentially at least – for movement' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 99). Taking the Russian doll metaphor too literally might prohibit movement between scenes, with smaller scenes enveloped by larger counterparts, but the idea of clear boundaries between scenes may be counterproductive. Artists who undergo less dramatic changes in genre/style from one release to the next may straddle multiple scenes and, in so doing, merge parts of each scene. While Trivium's *Ascendency* (2005) positioned the band as part of a metalcore scene, a later

album like *Silence in the Snow* (2015) might be more warmly received by participants of a mainstream/heavy metal scene. With a repertoire that appeals to both sets of scene participants, a Trivium concert can be understood to provide a space for both scenes to coalesce, albeit briefly.

While Kahn-Harris's Russian doll model accounts for the fact that 'scenes with varying degrees of autonomy may exist within other scenes' (2007, p. 22), interpreting scenes as having explicit boundaries is problematic. A perception of scenes as nested within one another seems to preclude or at least impede movement between scenes, not to mention participants or artefacts existing in multiple scenes simultaneously. Perhaps a more accurate framework of scenic interaction might be developed once one recognises that '[s]cenes have a loose and fluid nature to them, overlapping and merging with other social worlds' (Glass 2012, p. 697). By considering scenes as tangible while nonetheless highly malleable we can better understand how they interact. Indeed, Kahn-Harris intimates as much: 'Scenes themselves are constantly shifting, splitting and combining – any coherence can only be temporary' (2007, p. 22).

If not as Matroyshka dolls, how might we conceptualise metal/hardcore scenes? One particularly effective method, it would seem, is to consider scenes as rhizomes. Originating in botany, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari introduced the concept to philosophy in their two-volume work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, published as *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). Drawing on 'its etymological meaning, where "rhizo" means combining form and the biological term "rhizome" describes a form of plant that can extend itself through its underground horizontal tuber-like root system and develop new plants' (Colman 2010, p. 232), Deleuze and Guattari contrast rhizome with arboreal models of thought 'where parts are related to each other only through their relationship to a common root, and whose importance is measured according to their distance from the root' (McMahon 2005, p. 50). Deleuze's philosophy is no stranger to music (Hulse & Nesbitt 2010) nor to metal (Bogue 2004, 2007), but discussion of music and rhizome is less prevalent. Joseph Tate proffers a 'rhizomatic map' (2005, p. 177) of Radiohead's *Hail to the Thief* (2003), resulting in 'a loosely connected and fragmented representation of the

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album's uncontainable and fragile heterogeneity of subject matter' (p. 177) that stands in contrast to album analyses that progress in a linear, narrative-focused manner. In his keynote address to an international conference on rhizomes, Greg Hainge 'attempt[s] to ascertain what a rhizomatic structure would sound like by examining musical forms which appear to present a rhizomatic structure' (2006, p. 5) so as to inform potential 'rhizomatic interdisciplinary practice' (p. 7). He begins by analysing Mr Bungle as an example of music with a rhizomatic structure, before moving to 'truly rhizomatic' (p. 8) Japanese noise (specifically Merzbow), and finally settling on The Dillinger Escape Plan as typifying 'what a rhizomatic interdisciplinary practice might sound like' (p. 10).

> The nature of the rhizome is that of a moving matrix, composed of organic and non-organic parts forming symbiotic and aparallel connections, according to transitory and as yet undetermined routes (Colman 2010, p. 233).

In contrast to the implied Russian doll model of scenic interaction in which smaller local scenes are subservient to overarching global scenes, 'rhizomes have no hierarchical order to their compounding networks' (Colman 2010, p. 234). Since a global scene is, in essence, an amalgam of countless local scenes, it is usually at the local level that scenic change takes place. Characteristic practices of a single local scene may be spread through to other local scenes and eventually globally ('tough guy' hardcore and straight edge are good examples), thereby suggesting that local scenes exert a power over global scenes. However, local scenes rely upon the global scene as a vehicle for wider recognition, to transmit their practices elsewhere (remember that national and global networks of tape traders and letter writers have had a direct effect on the development of various styles and genres), and to introduce practices and ideas from other local scenes. Rather than a strict hierarchy between types of scene, they exist more in a continual feedback loop, each supporting the other to maintain (certain) traditions while introducing new ones. This democratising effect is also applied to distinctions between various components of a scene – institutions, artefacts, participants – such that one is not more or less significant to the scene than another. Indeed, since '[m]ultiplicities are rhizomatic' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 8) and '[a]ll

multiplicities are flat' (p. 9), conceiving metal/hardcore scenes as rhizomatic recognises the potential for any part of a scene to connect with another part of that scene or of another scene.

Acknowledging that scenic focuses have a basis in concretion but also exist in abstracted form (New York hardcore, the Gothenburg sound), rhizomatic scenes are unfixed: 'There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 8). Rather than highlight fixed points, the rhizome emphasises the connection between things and their very connectedness. Because '[t]here are no singular positions on the networked lines of a rhizome, only connected points which form connections between things' (Colman 2010, p. 233), any scenic institution, artefact, or participant can be connected to any other element of a scene. In this way, rhizomatic scenes address the issue of components shared and/or moving between multiple scenes. An artist can be part of a time/place-focused scene and a genre-focused scene (or two different genre-focused scenes) precisely because '[a]ny part within a rhizome may be connected to another part, forming a milieu that is decentred, with no distinctive end or entry point' (Colman 2010, p. 234). Deleuze and Guattari list six principles of a rhizome, the first and second being '[p]rinciples of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 7). This ostensibly simple idea accounts for both intra-scenic *and* inter-scenic connections.

In considering scenes rhizomatically, one can explain how scenes 'spread' from one place to another. In a rhizome '[t]here is no central root, no privileged locus of growth. Any patch of crabgrass, if uprooted and transplanted, may initiate a renewed process of growth and expansion' (Bogue 2007, p. 126). Similarly, any scenic artefact, institution, or participant carries with them the potential for new scenic connections. Tape traders in Bangkok receiving artefacts from a thrash scene in California are connecting to that foreign scene through that artefact and, during the process of integrating aspects of the new artefact, making new connections between these scenes. An apparent benefit of aforementioned models of subsumption is the recognition that when one refers to 'the (global)

hardcore scene', for instance, one is in fact referring to a vast heterogeneous construct of participants and institutions all over the world. However, this understanding of 'the (global) hardcore scene' remains artificially closed to other scenes – it is the hardcore scene and, therefore, *not* any other scene – but scene as rhizome recognises both the vast heterogeneous construct of the hardcore scene and that this scene (and those that comprise it) are always connected to other scenes within and without hardcore. Although they are a death metal band, The Black Dahlia Murder have been linked to hardcore scenes repeatedly (Angry Metal Guy 2005; Sergeant D 2011c), and vocalist Trevor Strnad has credited early performances alongside hardcore bands as influencing his band's live show (Frazier 2015). But '[t]hese lines, or lineaments, should not be confused with lineages of the arborescent type' since a rhizome 'is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 21). Such connections between scenes with differing focuses are made possible by the rhizomatic nature of the scene construct.

Conclusion

Genre, style, and scene nomenclature are used seemingly interchangeably in much metal/hardcore discourse; however, despite shared terminology, the three concepts are distinct and are most usefully considered as such. Genre is the most general term, encompassing multiple elements (visual, verbal, behavioural, discursive, ideological), but is nevertheless commonly understood as sonic-focused in both academic and non-academic discourse on metal/hardcore. Insofar as genres are broad and multifarious it follows that they are malleable and may be adapted to include disparate components. However, it is not simply that genres are especially pliable constructs; rather, genres are necessarily imprecise and unstable because their internal mechanisms dictate generic structuration. As an emergent assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), the nature of a given genre is contingent upon the elements that are understood as constructing that genre.

If genre refers to general conglomerations, style affords specificity. By denoting particular devices, style allows access to genre in a more literal sense. In citing, say, death metal style, one significantly narrows the scope of reference, while simultaneously enabling the abstraction of certain elements. When referring to a song that uses death metal (style) vocals, for instance, one specifies a particular aspect of the piece in question, but refrains from ascribing to the song the genre title death metal. Instead, such a song may include an element of death metal style, without actually being part of the death metal genre. The style-genre relationship is best understood as akin to that between token and type: style instantiates (a particular aspect of) genre, providing a physical, tangible way to access abstract genre constructs. In this way style functions as a synecdoche for genre, containing few elements but connoting many.

Less general than genre and less specific than style, scene binds aspects of both. Scene may be understood to ground genre in a physical time and place, but it can also serve as an imaginary community connecting individuals and institutions in various locations. Differences in scene type and focus allow aspects of style and genre to coalesce in numerous configurations, some highly specific, some relatively general. If style tokens genre, scene provides the space for that tokening. Inter- and intra-scenic connections are therefore essential conduits, facilitating movement of both small-scale and large-scale generic elements. To meet this demand scenes function rhizomatically, affording connections amongst any and all scenic elements, thereby allowing artists and artefacts to be situated in multiple scenes or to move between scenes.

Given the convoluted nature of the relationship between genre, style, and scene, one could perhaps expect internal relationships to be comparatively simple. However, in addition to their individual functions, the concepts and constructs discussed in the present chapter describe frameworks within which metal/hardcore participants may navigate and individualise (consciously or otherwise) their experience of the music culture.

Chapter Five – Creative Tensions

This chapter considers how metal/hardcore exists as an active music culture. I investigate the creative potential of tensions within this music culture, observing ways in which metal/hardcore participants reconcile the apparent dichotomy between perspectives of the music as homogeneous or as fragmented. While some people within and without the music culture perceive metal/hardcore as a unified whole, others argue that differences between particular genres and subgenres preclude the possibility of any kind of coherence. These conflicting views are articulated in specific ways as part of metal/hardcore discourse and manifest as part of generic artefacts. Two of the most significant tensions, I suggest, are: mainstream versus underground; and tradition versus progression.[218] Each tension is expressed differently, but both form part of wider struggles for meaning within broad genre, style, and scene constructs. These tensions arise in many areas of metal/hardcore culture either implicitly or explicitly, and function variously as an ideological focus for some participants or a peripheral element for others. Crucially, neither tension is ever 'resolved' in a literal sense; rather, each side of the argument relies on the other for creative motivation, forming part of a productive binary. Genres adapt to these tensions in various ways and, in so doing, remain active entities. In this way, the relationships between these differing ideologies are broadly similar to the symbiotic metal/hardcore relationship introduced in chapter two. Indeed, by studying how internal tensions are manifest, the present chapter further explores how metal/hardcore symbiosis functions as a creative apparatus for active engagement with the music culture.

The chapter begins with an example of mainstream/underground discourse in metal/hardcore journalism, before considering how these designations have been conceptualised in academic literature. External distinctions are then made internal by examining how notions of mainstream and underground developed as part of metal/hardcore tradition. Movements between these states, through

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[218] This second tension has also been identified in bluegrass: 'the expansion and festivalisation of bluegrass brought it into contact with the counterculture of the 1960s, spurring bands representative of it and creating a traditional/progressive divide within the genre' (Rockwell 2012, p. 368).

both mainstreaming and selling out, are investigated to better understand how mainstreams and undergrounds are configured. Finally, I observe a brief example of an ostensibly restrictive tradition forming part of the creative apparatus for generic adaptation.

Mainstream and Underground in Metal/Hardcore Discourse

Discussions of mainstream and underground, not to mention debates over artists 'selling out' or 'crossing over' are plentiful in metal/hardcore discourse. Titles of online articles ask questions like: 'does underground metal have a place in the mainstream?' (Dawes 2014); 'why do we hate the mainstream?' (It Djents 2015); 'has heavy metal sold out?' (D. Rosenberg 2015); and 'why are black metal fans such elitist assholes?' (Bayer 2014). The supposed move from underground to mainstream is a prevalent theme in metal/hardcore historiography.[219] Laina Dawes (2014) draws together some of the most prominent narratives found in discussions of mainstream and underground in metal/hardcore discourse, providing succinct examples of common themes. Dawes is a metal journalist, but her article is published by *Flavorwire* – principally a pop culture website and, though it includes articles on metal from time to time, decidedly not a metal website – and the article questions metal's place in the mainstream, while itself being an example of metal discourse in the mainstream. She notes that when metal artists receive attention in the mainstream press 'questions are raised: Who gets coverage and who doesn't? Do the writers behind these articles know what they're writing about?' (Dawes 2014), before deftly avoiding any such criticism by exclusively quoting metal journalists and stating their metal credentials. By including only those authors who are 'qualified' to discuss metal, Dawes pre-empts a negative backlash from certain metal fans, but, in the process, she limits her narrative to a solely metal perspective.

Dawes restates tried and tested metal tropes, arguing that since metal has 'always appealed to those who didn't want to fit into the norm, or couldn't fit into

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[219] Chapters in metal/hardcore historiographies include titles like 'Mass Appeal Madness' (Mudrian 2004), 'The Underground Breaks Through' (Ekeroth 2008), and 'Metal Goes Mainstream' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013).

the norm', any perception of metal becoming normalised will encounter resistance, not to mention that 'there is no way to satisfy a disgruntled fan who feels either that the coverage a band is getting is not "metal" enough, or that a band is "too metal" to be included on a musically diverse website' (Dawes 2014). Furthermore, '[a]s metal fans, we have an urge to protect what the music means to us, to keep it for ourselves. However, the passion to keep metal separate from the mainstream not only hinders the promotion of artists — in the age of the internet, it just doesn't make sense' (Dawes 2014). While she acknowledges the drive of fans to 'protect' their genre, Dawes also recognises that metal is not a possession and that such thinking actually constrains participants. Brandon Stosuy of *Pitchfork* argues that he does not 'see how people can be so territorial when black metal bands have Facebook pages and Twitter accounts and paid publicists' (in Dawes 2014), following Dawes' implication that the concepts of mainstream and non-mainstream have become outdated since the advent of widespread internet access. Nevertheless, he concedes that 'folks are territorial about their scenes' (Stosuy in Dawes 2014).

Founder of now-defunct metal website *Steel for Brains*, Jonathan Dick, 'questions the whole idea of underground metal: "Terminologies we grew up with like 'underground' and 'obscure' or even 'mysterious' are virtually useless now because of the Internet and social media. […] The second the hesher in Bumfuck, Alabama tweets something about how awesome your band is then you're no longer underground. You are, in fact, far above ground"' (in Dawes 2014). Regardless of whether or not an identifiable underground still exists in the twenty-first century, a feeling of metal being different from the mainstream persists such that an 'issue that's sparked controversy is exactly which bands get [mainstream] press' leading to accusations of 'the promotion of palatable metal bands that could potentially reach the masses with a sound that isn't "metal" in the classic sense' (Dawes 2014). Finally, the artists themselves are considered part of the mainstream/underground narrative when Dawes concludes that 'what is most important is how mainstream coverage benefits the bands', before recounting a conversation in which metal journalist Kim Kelly asserted that 'despite the perception that mainstream attention leads to a loss

of "underground" authenticity, bands know that it is in their best interest to play the game' (Dawes 2014).

Amongst the common tropes of metal fans defending their way of life from outsiders (a point to which we return later) and those outsiders experiencing the 'wrong kinds' of metal culture, Dawes' article provides a glimpse of two key aspects of the mainstream/underground relationship. First, while Dawes, Stosuy, and Dick all contend that a distinction between mainstream and underground is unsustainable in the twenty-first century, narratives of this precise distinction persist. Second, it is implied that categories of mainstream and underground have some phenomenological parameters including stylistic traits and media presence. On the one hand, a literal distinction between mainstream and underground is untenable because of broadly similar modes of production, therefore any conception of such a distinction must be ideological. Whereas, on the other hand, notional divides between mainstream and underground are undermined because of identifiable physical characteristics pertaining to each classification.

Defining Mainstream

While explicit uses or invocations of mainstream and underground are prevalent in metal/hardcore discourse, definitions of the terms are few and far between, echoing a similar lack of definitional clarity in academic literature (Huber 2007, 2013). Those theorists that have considered the mainstream generally circumscribe it 'in the negative, defined by what it *isn't* rather than what it *is*' (Huber 2013, p. 7; original emphases). Most likely, this is because '[t]he mainstream has no name for itself, or more properly, the record companies and broadcasters which disseminate it do not deploy the term. Rather it tends to be used in a pejorative sense by fans and cultural critics' (Toynbee 2000, p. 122). Indeed, Thornton (1995) deems mainstream to be 'an ideological term, a means of shoring up the "subcultural capital" of those who use it' (Toynbee 2000, p. 122),[220] rather than as a literal space of cultural production. Nevertheless, this conceptual mainstream has common

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[220] See also Toynbee (2002) pp. 149-150.

associations in the physical world: '[t]he term mainstream is associated with hits, stars, and corporate production. It is a keyword in discourses of high art and underground authenticity, in which it denotes conformity, predictability, and superficiality' (Holt 2007, p. 17). Mainstream 'suggests a type of music which is standardized, popular and easy to listen to' (Toynbee 2002, p. 149), and thus connotes particular aspects of composition, production, and consumption. It is by these principles that mainstream is contrasted with not mainstream, generating oversimplified binaries in which non-mainstream musics are pieces of art created by dedicated authors for serious appreciation, whereas mainstream music is a product designed by marketers with the express purpose of making money.

> 'Mainstream' musical genres are operating within a commercial system of record companies, contracts, marketing, publicity, management, support staff and so on; within this context performers tour and perform, make recordings, and create an image often following the conventions of the genre with which they are identified (Shuker 2008, p. 121).

Moving away from a negative perspective, Shuker's definition focuses on the modes of production of mainstream music, but in so doing suggests a mainstream that accounts for the majority of music one encounters as such in the Western world (if not elsewhere). In this literal sense, therefore, mainstream music has little function of differentiation past highlighting the unusual (by contemporary standards) nature of non-mainstream musical practices. Shuker's conception might be understood as signalling the opposite end of the spectrum to Thornton's ideological mainstream, but it emphasises the term's dual nature.

Alison Huber observes numerous ways in which 'mainstream' may be used, noting its application as 'the "other" to subcultural, alternative, underground, folk and art cultures', as place 'when things "go mainstream"', as 'a cultural force', as a 'marketing synonym for [a] "mass audience"', 'as an adjective, attached to a noun to signify some inherent aesthetic trait', 'in place of "normal" or "normative"', and even to 'refer to a socio-economic category used by politicians' (2013, pp. 4-5). These various conceptions of mainstream could suggest a category too vague to be of much use, but Huber contends that

'mainstream is constructed by practices just as specific as those enacted by subculturalists' (pp. 10-11). In this vein, Jason Toynbee asserts that a 'mainstream is a formation that brings together large numbers of people from diverse social groups and across large geographical areas in common affiliation to a musical style' (2002, p. 150; emphasis omitted). So, while mainstream may be applied to multiple phenomena, some key themes can be identified in its use in metal/hardcore discourse and elsewhere. Toynbee's three 'currents' that propel the mainstream are (1) hegemony, (2) stylistic middle ground, and (3) economy/market (2002, p. 150). The first of these themes is most prominent in academic discussions of the mainstream. Huber notes that for Hebdige (1979) 'the mainstream *is* hegemony' (Huber 2013, p. 7; original emphasis), and regarding her own explication of the multiple uses of mainstream 'there is one particular commonality: the desire to imagine, describe and map forms of dominance – be it dominance that is cultural, social, aesthetic, political or otherwise' (p. 11).

Holt sees the relationship between genre and mainstream as 'between a smaller culture with a distinct identity and a larger market or a dominant culture' (2007, p. 17). This theme of dominance is manifest in a variety of ways. Huber's account of her 'short-lived "mainstream love affair"' (2013, p. 11) with a song (pp. 11-12) comes down to the dominance of that song in an almost literal sense: hearing it everywhere she went for a certain period of time. This form of dominance, in which so-called mainstream media outlets on radio, television, and online promoted a song in a particularly comprehensive manner, provides a good example of the capabilities of the mainstream media. In this instance, the 'confluence of a series of disparate acts made that song "mainstream". Yet it was temporarily so' (Huber 2013, p. 12), suggesting that there were no intrinsic aspects of the song that made it mainstream, that it was merely a replaceable part in the mainstream machine. Moreover, Huber's observation that the song's existence as truly mainstream was temporary, not to mention geographically contingent,[221] is highly significant since it emphasises the

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[221] The song in question, Ultra's 'Say it Once' (*Ultra*, 1998), peaked at number 4 on the Australian singles chart and stayed there for twenty-one weeks, whereas it reached number 16 on the UK chart, dropping off after six weeks.

constructed nature of the mainstream. For while the mainstream 'might appear to us as inevitable, natural and ahistorical, [it] is instead produced by a range of historically specific practices that constitute this space in and for our imagination' (Huber 2013, p. 11).

A danger with discussing *the* mainstream is that this nomenclature can conceal the means by which any mainstream is constructed – by multiple actors and institutions, sometimes but not always working toward an agreed goal – and, in so doing, support an understanding of mainstream as singular. Of course, if one interprets the logic of mainstream as concerned primarily with dominance, especially in the case of hegemony, the appearance of a single, unified mainstream is appealing. Those involved in activities that are perceived as not mainstream are immediately positioned as resistant toward an overwhelming power structure, a position in which cultural capital abounds. There is an obvious allusion here to conceptions of tradition: despite appearances, traditions are constructed and reinforced through repetition. The continual repetition of rituals both physical and metaphorical ensures that tradition remains a dominant force, subordinating any movements that attempt to undermine it. As social constructs, traditions are subject to restructuring at any time and, much like mainstream constructs, the ability to alter parts of a tradition (dramatically or subtly) affords its continued dominance.

> [T]he mainstream has to transcend *particular* communities in order to reach the largest number of people possible. It follows that in order to produce a mainstream the music industries must find musical texts and generic discourse which 'fold difference in', and articulate distinct social groups together (Toynbee 2000, pp. 122-123; original emphasis).

Toynbee posits a dual mechanism wherein the mainstream simultaneously homogenises non-mainstream musics while accommodating those various musics. Put another way, the mainstream affords both homogeneous and heterogeneous readings. Depending on one's perspective, mainstream music culture includes only those texts that fit broadly within mainstream norms or, conversely, includes virtually any texts which, through their inclusion in the mainstream, thereby become mainstream. This is a crucial distinction for it supposes on the one hand that texts might be created (consciously or

otherwise) to conform to the mainstream or, on the other hand, that the mainstream is a primarily benevolent force that is inclusive of anything. For some, the mainstream as inclusive, or universal (Toynbee 2000, p. 123), puts it at odds with the concept of genre: 'Within the broad spectrum of mainstream popular music there is "pop music," a category that I am reluctant to define as a genre in a strict sense' (Holt 2007, p. 17). In contrast with genre, Holt conceives of mainstream as a homogenised mass while the latter is a more specialised grouping. However, he also refers to 'mainstream country' (pp. 63-79) and 'mainstream jazz' (pp. 105-127), suggesting that the mainstream may be broken into subsets or, more pertinently, that within the country genre one can identify a mainstream of some sort. Similar disagreements over homo- or heterogeneity abound in conceptions of tradition. For some, 'the pursuit of purity has often led hardcore subcultures to enforce a startling homogeneity of dress and sound, which effectively stifles artistic creativity and obstructs the participation of various types of "outsiders"' (R. Moore 2004, p. 308), whereas others interpret hardcore tradition as promoting creativity through the DIY ethos.

In a similar way, conceptions of underground may be literal and/or metaphorical. Jennifer Matsue's exploration of the 'underground Tokyo hardcore scene' (2009, p. 3 and throughout) locates the scene as underground as a result of two factors. First, '[t]he vast majority of these performers did not have any connections with corporate labels nor express any desire to become professionals. Only a few groups were on independent labels', and, second, 'the performance of hard and heavy music with screaming vocals […] could be read as resistive, in the least, to the dominant perception of the clean-cut and glossy performance of mainstream Japanese popular music' (p. 3). Thus, underground is defined as counter to mainstream through modes of production, ideological underpinning, and, to a lesser extent perhaps, elements of style. Matsue later refines her use of the term to position a disengagement with mainstream modes of production as most significant to the underground, asserting that it 'refers to music-making associated with bands without labels, or on local independent labels […] without direct expression of a unified, reactionary political stance' (p. 34). Indeed, Matsue notes older research has

employed terms like subculture, youth culture, alternative, or indie to refer broadly to non-mainstream cultures (p. 33), and, in this sense, 'underground' is merely the favoured nomenclature in metal/hardcore discourse for that which is not mainstream. To a large extent, then, conceptions of both mainstream and underground rely upon constructing an Other against which to operate.

Stephen Graham's use of underground (2016) is other to both Western art music and popular music. A quasi-middle ground between the two poles, underground encompasses musics often classified as avant-garde or fringe, subordinating generic distinctions and foregrounding relatively loose collectives of artists and institutions. As noted in chapter two, conceptions of underground are prominent in discourse on hardcore, commonly understood as an ideological holdover from punk. Ryan Moore suggests that 'punk responds to "the condition of postmodernity" in two seemingly contradictory ways',[222] the first 'appropriates signs, symbols, and style for the purposes of shock and semiotic disruption, the second attempts to go "underground" and insulate punk subculture from the superficiality of postmodern culture' (R. Moore 2004, p. 307). The first response, what R. Moore calls the 'culture of deconstruction', 'was more prevalent during the initial explosion of punk in the 1970s, while the second (or "culture of authenticity") is more characteristic of the "hardcore" or "straight-edge" subcultures' (2004, pp. 307-308). This culture of authenticity, in which one must strive for 'real' or 'true' experiences, may position the underground in opposition to the mainstream, but it does so at the expense of action. R. Moore observes that hardcore participants' quest for the 'imaginary purity of commercial independence' (2004, p. 308) led to a self-imposed 'imagined marginality' (Glass 2012, p. 703) alongside restrictive stylistic boundaries. Combined, these two factors resulted in an exclusive and (depending upon whom one asks) homogeneous hardcore genre that focused on continually affirming internal distinctions, 'ridiculed outsiders and condemned all gestures toward accessibility or popularity as "selling out"' (2004, p. 324).

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[222] Most directly, the condition of postmodernity is 'a crisis of meaning caused by the commodification of everyday life' (R. Moore 2004, p. 305).

Countering those theorists and critics who cite the 'no longer existent separation between mainstream and underground (at least on the part of the music industry)' (Roccor 2000, p. 89), Graham argues that there still exists a functional literal underground in the 'digital age' of the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Whereas previous undergrounds relied upon physical media and literal networks of participants and institutions, contemporary undergrounds employ digital tools to share artefacts and connect participants around the world. Recurring arguments about the accessibility of a digital underground (see above) do not disqualify the underground's continued existence; rather, '*unproblematic potential access* here does not seem as important […] as the *possibility of desiring such access*' (Graham 2016, p. 11; original emphases). If anything, the fact that an underground remains discernible despite artefacts being more accessible than ever before suggests that metaphorical notions of the underground have become stronger.

Multiple Mainstreams

The idea of multiple mainstreams within popular music is not new. Toynbee identifies three 'overlapping periods' (2002, p. 150) in twentieth century popular music. The first period 'runs from the early 1920s to the turn of the 1950s' and centres upon 'Tin Pan Alley-Hollywood', '[r]ock then constitutes a second mainstream, beginning in the 1950s and reaching its height in terms of scale and influence in the 1970s', and '[s]ince the 1980s we have been living in a third moment of plural international networks' (Toynbee 2002, p. 150). These periods are 'distinct enough to suggest we should talk about mainstream*s* in the plural' (p. 150; original emphasis). Although his periods may overlap to an extent, Toynbee's mainstreams are nevertheless temporally discrete. As part of his article on historiography and canonisation in popular music, Antti-Ville Kärjä (2006) discusses multiple canons. Alongside specific genre-focused canons, Kärjä describes small-group canons, a mainstream canon, and an alternative canon. In a sense, my conception of multiple mainstreams draws together ideas from both scholars. One may identify various mainstreams that exist concurrently but are nonetheless differentiated temporally and generically. We

can add to Holt's (2007) mainstream country and mainstream jazz any number of mainstreams that operate internally within a specific genre but are also visible outside the confines of that genre. One can identify mainstream metal/hardcore bands that are at once mainstream within metal/hardcore and, by definition, known to those who would not classify themselves as fans of the genre. Again, the plural nature of mainstreams becomes significant as some metal/hardcore participants may refer to a particular band as mainstream despite that band not receiving much attention outside the genre's typical media and participant base. In this circumstance a band might be deemed mainstream on the basis of substantial media coverage within the genre itself.

The time-sensitive aspect of mainstreams becomes especially apparent when viewing the phenomenon in this light: recalling Huber (2013), the perceived dominance of a given artist or song is most often limited by the media's incessant drive to cover new terrain. This positioning of mainstream as internal to the genre is an example of what Erik Hannerz calls a concave framework: 'A convex bends outwards against an external mainstream, whereas a concave bends inwards, positioning the mainstream within the subcultural' (2013, p. 51). Attributes that may render an artefact mainstream in a convex framework might not have the same effect in a concave framework – differentiating oneself from an external mainstream through clothing style is arguably simpler than doing so in relation to an internal mainstream. Hannerz's conception of the relationship between mainstreams 'renders most objects open to (re)definition, as the same object can be defined differently depending on what framework is being used' (2013, p. 59). Crucially, conceptualising internal mainstreams demonstrates that 'the mainstream is far from a residual category; instead, it is an integral part of the subcultural. It is the contrariness between the sacred and the profane that makes this distinction meaningful' (p. 59).

A genre-dependent mainstream implies, first, that the music can be tied to a specific genre in some way and, second, that genre participants can identify certain stylistic traits that differentiate a mainstream artist from any other. These elements of style are a mix of relatively stable characteristics that remain mostly unchanged regardless of the current genre mainstream, and of those traits

which are more time-specific: '[t]he mainstream transatlantic dance style of the mid-1980s might be described as up-tempo soul' (Toynbee 2000, p. 135). As I discuss below, the configuration of styles that have been interpreted as indicative of mainstream metal/hardcore have varied considerably, but a constant theme that is also observable in other genre mainstreams is a perception of styles borrowed from or deemed acceptable to those outside the normal fan base of the genre. In other words, some stylistic attributes are understood as traditional, and therefore acceptable, while others are not. We might infer, then, a connection between specific stylistic traits and the three primary themes of the mainstream. To be identifiable as mainstream, an artist needs to utilise stylistic elements that are perceived as inclusive (acceptable to any fan base), thereby affording an interpretation in which the artist is positioned within a homogeneous mass as part of the dominant mainstream.

Before we can approach the intricacies of mainstream and underground metal/hardcore, we must first understand where and how these literal and figurative concepts emerged.

Mainstream Metal/Hardcore

According to Waksman, notions of mainstream and underground first appeared within metal during the early 1980s: '[p]erhaps the most important shift that occurred during the NWOBHM era was the gradual emergence of distinct underground and mainstream components of heavy metal' (2009, pp. 173-174).[223] Both mainstream and underground emerged at the same time since, '[t]hrough NWOBHM, metal became at once more assimilated into the pop music marketplace and more underground' (p. 209), with a band like Def Leppard typifying the former group, and Venom exemplifying the latter category. Indeed, 'Venom may have been the first band to deliberately seek a more limiting classification for itself [within metal]. With this gesture, emphasizing narrowness rather than breadth of appeal, exclusivity rather than

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[223] Waksman notes that Walser (1993) and Weinstein (2000) date the advent of mainstream/underground in metal 'later in the 1980s with the concurrent rise of thrash metal and popularization of a more commercially minded metal sound via MTV' (Waksman 2009, p. 174), but the seeds for this division were sown during NWOBHM.

inclusiveness, the seeds of an underground metal sensibility were planted' (p. 195). The specific traits of deliberately limited appeal and exclusivity would become essential to some conceptions of underground metal/hardcore in later years, but the mechanism out of which such ideologies grew began quite differently. Signed to British independent label Neat Records for their first four albums, Venom and label mates Raven 'helped to stimulate a change in the values surrounding heavy metal, presenting the extreme styles they practiced as more real and true, less beholden to outside tastes, than the rest' (Waksman 2009, p. 189). These bands were able to do this by '[f]ollowing the model established by punk' (p. 174) of independent record labels run by fans of the music and designed primarily to promote that music rather than make money like larger major labels. Although punk had begun (or at least popularised the idea of) independent labels, by the end of the 1970s and beginning of the '80s, punk had largely become a major label pursuit. However, while many punk bands had moved away from it, a network of independent labels remained active, always looking for the next big thing.

Into the void created by punk's move to the mainstream came hardcore. Whereas punk had espoused a do-it-yourself ethos of resistance to 'the man' – not overly dissimilar in kind to previous 'youth cultures' like the hippies, mods, rockers, teddy boys, etc. – before becoming a money-making juggernaut and seemingly abandoning those principles, the notion of DIY and related ideal of the underground were, by many accounts, fundamental to hardcore music culture. 'Where hardcore was concerned, DIY became a means of distinguishing it from both the mainstream music industry and the preceding wave of punk' (Waksman 2009, p. 216). Here, a vital narrative emerges regarding the significance of DIY, independence, and the underground in relation to hardcore music: while a genre like metal applied a mainstream/underground logic retrospectively (around a decade after the first metal records), hardcore music is supposedly based on the ideals of the underground (inclusivity, community, emotional connection).[224] For many

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[224] Moreover, the hardcore underground principle of inclusivity is at odds with the exclusivity promoted by Venom's construction of a metal underground.

hardcore participants, especially those who helped found the genre, hardcore and the underground are synonymous, each describing a physical and ideological resistance to mainstream culture, understood variously as consumerist, vapid, and beholden to the logics of late capitalism. Hardcore's underground credentials were solidified in a tangible sense by a means of production that relied upon independent record labels, tape trading, fanzines, and part-time promoters, and in an ideological sense through lyrics imploring participants to support the hardcore scene.[225] Independent production and DIY practices became 'defining aspects of the genre' (Waksman 2009, p. 212) to such an extent that hardcore music was understood to embody the notion of underground. Haenfler illustrates hardcore's opposition to mainstream popular culture in a table entitled 'Mainstream Reality Versus DIY Hardcore Ideals' (2006, p. 171):

Mainstream	Hardcore
Impersonal (such as barriers at shows)	Personal relationships
Musicians = professional performers	Musicians = fans
Commercial business	Art
Commodity	Community
Professionalization (such as promoters)	DIY

Table 2: Haenfler's differences between mainstream and hardcore (Haenfler 2006, p. 171).

This romanticised narrative of hardcore as representing the opposite of mainstream culture remains prevalent despite the fact that 'Hardcore has always had some mainstream commercial appeal' (Haenfler 2006, p. 17). Since

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[225] See, for example, Agnostic Front's 'United and Strong' (*Victim in Pain*, 1984).

at least the early 1990s, hardcore bands have become more prominent outside traditional hardcore media: 'Strife and Earth Crisis have both played one of heavy metal's biggest events, Ozzfest. By 2002, even more hardcore bands were receiving mainstream attention, earning radio airplay and slots on MTV 2' (p. 17). Examples of hardcore-related genres may even be found in unquestionably mainstream circles, when in '2005, pop-punk band Green Day and metalcore bands Hatebreed and Killswitch Engage were nominated for Grammy Awards, a sure sign of the music's widespread popularity' (p. 168). The sustained commercialisation of hardcore (to use Haenfler's term) has (inevitably) led to tensions within the genre. Arguments made against artists perceived as more commercial are well trodden and reminiscent of those directed at punk more than a decade earlier. On the one hand, '[a]s bands moved away from the DIY ethic to become somewhat more commercially successful, many downplayed their ties to sXe' (Haenfler 2006, p. 170), thereby conforming to the mainstream's homogenisation of previously nuanced subcultures. On the other hand, however, many hardcore fans (especially straight edge devotees) 'question the convictions and authenticity of highly commercial bands that claim hardcore or sXe roots' (p. 171), since these bands are understood as falsely claiming hardcore legitimacy as a marketing strategy. These narratives function as part of a feedback loop in which hardcore bands who are perceived as mainstream are understood as lacking some kind of hardcore authenticity, but any artist claiming some affiliation to the hardcore underground will be met with suspicion thereby confirming their position as *not* underground.

Whilst independent labels were not foundational to metal in the same way they were to hardcore, they nevertheless played an important role in the rise of mainstream/underground discourse during the early 1980s. If hardcore's relationship with independent production began as a response to mainstream co-optation of the punk aesthetic, metal's embrace of independent record labels was a similar reaction to the overwhelming commercial success of much heavy metal during the 1970s. The significance of independent record labels to the evolution of metal/hardcore is not lost on authors like Mudrian (2004), who gives record labels similar billing to bands, nor Waksman, who includes an entire

chapter devoted to case studies of three independent labels based on the west coast of the United States: hardcore/punk oriented SST,[226] metal focused Metal Blade, and punk/alternative concentrated Sub Pop (2009, pp. 210-255).

As far as metal is concerned, 'Metal Blade arguably did more than any U.S. label—with the exception of New York-based Megaforce—to cultivate a more "underground" stream of American metal that was steeped in the influence of NWOBHM' (Waksman 2009, pp. 213-214). Metal Blade founder and CEO, Brian Slagel, was already an established member of the fledging literal metal/hardcore underground through his tape trading and brief tenure authoring a fanzine (pp. 229-230), but in launching his own label, Slagel helped foster the emerging conceptual underground. Insomuch as 'Slagel established Metal Blade as an outlet for a sort of metal less likely to exhibit pop appeal' (p. 229), he offered those artists who shared Venom's dislike of some forms of metal the opportunity to indulge their preferred vision for the genre. Along with similarly independent label Megaforce, Metal Blade promoted artists who would become central to a formulation of metal with relatively distinct genres, so that '[a]t a time when some local bands, led by Mötley Crüe, were beginning to find major success on a national scale' (p. 229), Megaforce released Metallica's *Kill 'Em All* (1983) before Metal Blade released Slayer's *Show No Mercy* (1983) five months later.

Despite the seemingly perfect union represented by independent labels (literal underground) signing artists whose music went against the grain of the mainstream (conceptual underground), it was rarely so simple: 'Independent record production became a crucial new aspect of metal economics, but for the vast majority of bands remained a means to an end more than the ideological cornerstone of a do-it-yourself ethos' (Waksman 2009, p. 209). Unlike their counterparts in hardcore, then, many metal bands of the early-to-mid 1980s took the opportunity to sign with independent labels for practical reasons more

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[226] Black Flag guitarist Greg Ginn 'expanded his radio parts operation Solid State Tuners in 1978 so he could put out a record' (Adams 2008), with SST initially releasing Black Flag's *Nervous Breakdown* (1979) before becoming a significant label in hardcore and post-punk during the 1980s (Azerrad 2001).

than any ethical concerns. Indeed, by the release of their third albums, Metallica had moved from Megaforce to Elektra, releasing *Master of Puppets* (1986), and Slayer had signed with Def Jam Recordings prior to releasing *Reign in Blood* (1986). However, rather than undermining a notion of metal as related to some idea of the underground, moves by previously underground bands towards a broader mainstream helped reinforce the internal dichotomy. After 'NWOBHM showed that heavy metal *could* be brought back down to the grassroots level' (Waksman 2009, p. 209; original emphasis), a reaction to the enormous commercial success of bands like Led Zeppelin, the idea of a band like Metallica leaving the underground provided an opportunity for new(er) artists to take their place. Whereas hardcore had begun life as essentially connected to an ideology of underground resistance, the development of similar ideas in metal were, from the very beginning, in addition to extant notions on the configuration of the genre. So, while hardcore might be understood as wholly in opposition to some form of external mainstream, one can easily understand metal as having internal distinctions between mainstream metal and underground metal.

NWOBHM introduced a notional underground to metal and, twinned with the literal underground networks built by hardcore, thrash metal initially populated and propagated the idea of underground metal. However, beginning around 1986 some of the most prominent thrash bands undertook a migration from underground to mainstream, from independent to major labels, from a niche, dedicated fan base to globally recognised artists. Thrash's sonic, visual, discursive, and ideological styles may have limited the appeal of a band like Megadeth when compared to, say, Michael Jackson, but these elements of style nevertheless came to represent something of the mainstream within metal. Stylistic connotations had been attributed to mainstream/underground constructions for some time. Venom felt that '[h]eavy metal had become too "technical"' (Waksman 2009, p. 194), and when creating Metal Blade, Slagel was 'distinctly drawn to an underground strain of metal […] that placed more emphasis on "heaviness" than on melodic hooks and anthemlike choruses' (p. 229). Much the same could be said of hardcore insomuch as it was a faster, more abrasive form of punk rock. But in the aftermath of thrash metal's move

to the mainstream, some of the genre's more prominent stylistic features had themselves become mainstream. It was in this landscape that more 'extreme' genres like death metal and black metal came to the fore, each exhibiting stylistic traits that could be traced to thrash but were nevertheless clearly not mainstream.

Mainstreaming

After thrash metal bands had moved to major labels during the mid-to-late 1980s, the metal/hardcore underground required new blood. Into the space recently vacated by thrash came a group of genres often described as extreme metal (Kahn-Harris 2007). Like thrash metal before them, death metal and grindcore bands relied upon independent labels to fund and release their music. Labels like Metal Blade and Roadrunner in the US, and UK-based Earache, became the destination for extreme metal bands of the late 1980s and early '90s.[227] Earache released music by Napalm Death, Entombed, and Morbid Angel, while Roadrunner oversaw recordings by Obituary and Deicide, and Metal Blade released albums by Cannibal Corpse. Thanks in large part to the support offered by these labels, by the early 1990s extreme metal had cultivated a devoted underground fan base, which actively participated in a literal underground buttressed by a diligent tape trading and fanzine writing community. Although 'death metal's commercial breakthroughs often centered around sensational storylines […] independent record labels such as Roadrunner and Earache were obviously great success stories, boasting sales figures comparable to other indies specializing in "mainstream" music' (Mudrian 2004, p. 182).[228] Unsurprisingly, major labels were soon courting independent labels and extreme metal bands in search of the next big thing.

During the early 1990s a range of licensing deals were signed between independent and major labels. Earache were the first independent

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[227] Germany's Nuclear Blast 'began with a concentration of hopelessly obscure punk and hardcore releases [but] began moving in a more metallic direction by 1990' (Mudrian 2004, p. 171).

[228] Mudrian recounts one such 'sensational' story wherein British police raided the offices of Earache Records in 1991 (Mudrian 2004, pp. 180-182).

metal/hardcore label to publicise doing business with a major label with an extreme metal band when, '[b]y the summer of 1992, Earache and Columbia had agreed on a North American licensing deal to distribute Cathedral' (Mudrian 2004, p. 185). Following this deal, '[w]ord traveled fast in the tightly linked major label assembly, and soon labels like Atlantic, East/West and Def American Records were also courting other Earache artists' (Mudrian 2004, pp. 185-186) – Godflesh guitarist/vocalist Justin Broadrick recalls the band being approached by Atlantic Records even before the Earache/Columbia deal (p. 186). Cathedral's second album, *The Ethereal Mirror* (1993), was the first record released jointly through independent Earache in the UK and Sony Music-owned Columbia Records in the US, though the companies' relationship was only just beginning. More significant collaboration between the labels began when '[s]hortly after [Earache's US label manager Jim] Welch left Earache for a position as director of A&R at Columbia in April of 1993, Earache entered into a three-year North American licensing deal with Sony Music on July 13th, 1993' (Mudrian 2004, p. 187). While it may have appeared unimportant at the time, '[o]ne of the contract's stipulations was that Columbia had free rein to specifically choose which albums to release from the Earache roster' (p. 187), a provision that resulted in some Earache artists having music distributed through Columbia against the bands' wishes.

Alongside Earache, other independent metal labels were coupling with majors. 'Though it was never highly publicized, much of the Metal Blade Records catalog had been distributed through Warner Bros. since 1990' (Mudrian 2004, p. 188); however, unlike the Earache/Columbia deal, 'Metal Blade had the power to decide what records they would offer to their major label distributor' (p. 188). According to Slagel, Metal Blade deliberately refrained from offering certain bands to Warner Bros. to avoid the major label suggesting changes to an artist's music (p. 188), thereby allowing Slagel to continue acting as a gatekeeper between literal underground and mainstream. Some artists were able to sign joint deals with independent and major labels that suggested they were more marketable than other bands in the underground. 'Roadrunner Records worked out a licensing deal of their own with Sony label Epic Records [that] unlike Earache's or Metal Blade's, was exclusively for the label's most

commercially successful act, Sepultura' (Mudrian 2004, p. 189). Beginning in September 1991, Morbid Angel manager Günter Ford negotiated a deal between the band and Warner Bros. subsidiary Giant Records for licensed distribution in the US, while Earache would retain the rights to release the band's music in Europe (Mudrian 2004, p. 184).

Like thrash metal bands moving from independent to major labels – from underground to mainstream – years earlier, extreme metal artists were not changed by the mere act of signing contracts. However, the perception of those bands from metal/hardcore participants who pride themselves on their affiliation to the underground was nevertheless effected by such a move. Although death metal, doom metal, or grindcore were never likely to enter the pantheon of mainstream popular music in the same way as, say, Huber's earlier example, specific bands could now be positioned as mainstream (in) metal. In more than a few cases this shift in perception was reinforced by notable changes in elements of style in composition, production, or album artwork. Coupled with their recent moves to major labels, such changes were widely interpreted as these bands making a deliberate move from underground to mainstream metal. However some fans received them, the bands involved in these deals all deny consciously changing their music at the behest of a major label.

Cathedral's deal with Columbia appears to have been based in part on the band's stylistic difference to other extreme metal artists. 'Cathedral's Sabbath-induced doomy groove ultimately had a far more marketable appeal' (Mudrian 2004, p. 185) than vocalist Lee Dorrian's previous band Napalm Death. Dorrian certainly thought as much: 'I suppose they saw us as being the most commercially viable. When the *Soul Sacrifice* EP [1992] came out it was a bit more melodic than the other stuff that Earache was putting out' (in Mudrian 2004, p. 185). For those bands that were perceived to have less appeal to a mainstream market, 'the temptation to craft a more accessible record loomed heavily', however 'all of the Earache bands that released material through Columbia claimed to have felt no pressure from the label to manufacture a more sellable album' (p. 191). Regardless of supposed pressure from their new major label handlers, most of the extreme metal bands involved in the

Earache/Columbia deal 'would record their most accessible albums to that point' (p. 191). Mudrian's description of Entombed's first album released through Columbia is typical: 'Although still heavier than anything even approaching mainstream, the aggressively marketed *Wolverine Blues* [1993] […] delivered a crushing midtempo groove that was more akin to traditional rock and metal than brutal death metal or grindcore' (Mudrian 2004, pp. 192-193). However, despite appearances, Entombed drummer Nicke Andersson states that the band 'didn't know it would be on Columbia when we wrote it. […] It was absolutely not written for them' (in Mudrian 2004, p. 193). Former Carcass drummer Ken Owens espouses a similar message when recounting the writing of his band's first album released through Columbia, *Heartwork* (1993):

> We'd done three brutal albums by then, and although they had worked for us, we wanted to work with something a bit more accessible […] And although *Heartwork* made us a lot more accessible, we still thought of ourselves as an underground band, regardless of the fact that we were on a major label (Ken Owens in Mudrian 2004, p. 193).

Entombed and Carcass serve as pertinent examples of the potential disconnect between the artist's intention and the audience's reception of their art. For while both bands contend that stylistic differences one may hear when comparing, say, Entombed's *Wolverine Blues* to their previous album, *Clandestine* (1991), are a result of band members wanting to try new things musically, the way these albums were packaged and marketed became vital to their reception. Having been told the title of Entombed's upcoming album, Columbia A&R 'Josh Sarubin contacted Marvel Comics, attempting to arrange a tie in with the record and one of Marvel's most popular characters, Wolverine' (Mudrian 2004, p. 191). Marvel agreed to license the use of the character on a pressing of the album cover, as well as in a partially animated video for the song 'Wolverine Blues' (1993). While Columbia must have been thrilled at this kind of promotion, the band members were less enthused: 'It was like we were run over by a tank or something. […] We had nothing to say about it. The actual song "Wolverine Blues" was taken from a James Ellroy book' (Andersson in Mudrian 2004, p. 191).

A similar albeit less contentious situation arose when Columbia 'commissioned prestigious artist H.R. Giger to provide a cast aluminum sculpture' (p. 191) for the cover artwork to Carcass's *Heartwork*. This was a particularly conspicuous change for Carcass, whose first two albums were adorned with collages of cadavers and diseased body parts handmade by vocalist/bassist Jeff Walker. Although both bands had released music videos previously, the videos for 'Wolverine Blues' and 'Heartwork' (1993) positioned them apart from their underground contemporaries. Arguably less overtly 'corporate' than Entombed's video featuring a comic book character, the music video for Carcass's 'Heartwork' is notably better quality than all of their previous videos, looking more akin to rock music videos of the time. Not only were these videos distinctive in their quality, but because during the early 1990s 'MTV's heavy metal speciality program *Headbanger's Ball* began playing videos from Sepultura, Morbid Angel and Napalm Death with increasing regularity' (Mudrian 2004, p. 180), metal fans of all stripes were able to access these artefacts with ease. Put simply, through no fault of their own both Entombed and Carcass had acquired the appearance of artists seeking a wider audience, potentially for commercial gain. By having their names attached to glossy, professional promotional campaigns these bands immediately lost some of their underground charm. Moreover, this new imagery was received alongside changes in composition, performance, and production captured on the bands' most recent albums. Considered together, extreme metal fans perceived these albums as concerted attempts by the bands to position themselves within mainstream metal. Entombed and Carcass were emblematic of a group of extreme metal artists that were perceived by some to have sold out, but were, in fact, mainstreamed.

From the perspective of a stereotypical metal/hardcore participant (or any so-called subculturalist) the simplest definition of mainstream and underground may be that the former is deemed unacceptable, while the latter is recognised as acceptable.[229] With this in mind, when a song, artist, or genre moves from

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[229] Thanks to my colleague, Jamie Moore, for making this observation. Moore identifies a similar acceptable/unacceptable dichotomy in the reception of Miles Davis (2017, p. 29) and Robert Glasper (pp. 74-75).

underground to mainstream, there is a corresponding change in status constructed by those who first made the distinction. Of course, it is telling that these designations appear most commonly as one-sided: it is unusual indeed to encounter a text written by an author positioning the mainstream as acceptable and the underground as unacceptable, rarer still to find someone describe a previously underground genre becoming mainstream as a positive change. Nevertheless, the movement from underground to mainstream, from acceptable to unacceptable, can generally be reduced to two processes: mainstreaming and selling out. While these terms are clearly linked insomuch as they share a beginning and end point, there are two key factors distinguishing one from the other. First, mainstreaming and selling out can be differentiated by scale. Mainstreaming may be understood most simply at the level of genre, wherein a genre becomes mainstream. By contrast, selling out commonly occurs at the level of artist, whereby an artist sells out. Contained within this rhetoric is the second and most significant differentiating factor: agency. Mainstreaming is something that *happens to* a genre (or, in some cases, an artist) because of outside forces, whereas selling out is something that an artist *does* of their own volition. This (second) distinction is key, as it pertains explicitly to notions of intention that continually arise in discussions of selling out (which appear more often than mainstreaming in journalistic discourse). As this section will make clear, while one can make a distinction between the processes of mainstreaming and selling out, (one of) the primary reason(s) the two ideas are conflated so commonly is down to themes shared by both. Before discussing these shared themes, and their affect on how we might conceptualise undergrounds and mainstreams, it is useful to explore how the concepts of mainstreaming and selling out are discussed.

Much like selling out, '[t]he mainstreaming of an alternative and/or underground popular music genre is often seen to go hand in hand with a waning of its authenticity and credibility' (Baker, Bennett, & Taylor 2013, p. xi). So while mainstreaming is a process that happens to a genre, it nonetheless influences the way those who favour the underground view that genre. Internal elements of the genre that were once indicative of its underground (or, at least, non-mainstream) status may come to be interpreted as emblematic of the genre's

new-found mainstreamness. A genre that was once positioned as not-mainstream has been repositioned by others to now inhabit mainstream space. Haenfler employs the notion of commercialisation to describe the process by which genres might be mainstreamed. By framing the argument in this way, Haenfler draws our attention to the influence(s) of market and media in the creation and maintenance of both undergrounds and mainstreams.

> Clarke (1986) claimed that subcultural style goes through two processes: diffusion and defusion. As the popularity of a style grows, it is diffused throughout the public, spreading to other regions via television, magazines, and now the Internet. As a style is diffused it is also *defused*, that is stripped of its power to meaningfully challenge mainstream culture (Haenfler 2006, p. 173; original emphasis).

Immediately apparent in Haenfler's account of John Clarke's theory is the matter of agency. It is not that subcultural style diffuses itself outside its own subcultural boundaries; rather, 'it is diffused'. Moreover, following the expanding of subcultural elements outside its original audience, the supposed power of the subculture 'to meaningfully challenge mainstream culture' is diluted to the point of disappearing. After all, how can a subculture challenge the mainstream if it cannot even preserve its position as something other than the mainstream? Hence, 'it seems media attention and commercialization destroys the authenticity of the subculture by making it a meaningless commodity' (Haenfler 2006, p. 173). Clearly, 'the media' (that is, mainstream media) plays a significant role in the process of mainstreaming by drawing the attention of those outside the subculture to artefacts and participants inside the subculture. However, '[t]he media does not necessarily defuse or destroy subcultures' (p. 175). Instead, 'niche media' (p. 175) provide some kind of cohesion between previously unconnected participants, artefacts, and institutions, while external media has the power to identify something as (in this case) subcultural: '[a] subculture may not even *be* a subculture until the media label it so' (p. 175; original emphasis).[230] Some form of media and, in that sense, commercialisation is thus required to manifest undergrounds and

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[230] Haenfler suggests that 'niche media, such as 'zines and independent music catalogs, can help solidify a scene' (2006, p. 175), but my use of the term is expanded somewhat to include media that pertains explicitly to metal/hardcore (magazines, websites, etc.).

mainstreams in any literal, tangible manner. One may claim the existence of some underground, but without artefactual evidence like that provided by niche media, that underground is purely notional. That being said, the primary role of the media in mainstreaming is as an active external force plucking a given genre or artist from underground obscurity and thrusting them into the mainstream. Indeed, an underground artist with the best intentions to remain firmly underground 'may gain widespread popularity and suddenly be playing in front of thousands of kids' (Haenfler 2006, p. 172).

While not quite to the extent Haenfler suggests, there are examples of metal/hardcore bands and genres being mainstreamed by external mainstream media. British radio DJ John Peel may have been responsible for mainstreaming extreme metal in the UK during the late 1980s. Always one for showcasing music that most of his listeners would not have heard otherwise, Peel used his weekly programme on BBC Radio 1 to introduce a national audience to various underground musics. 'As he'd before with Napalm Death, Peel was immediately taken with *Reek* [*of Putrefaction*] and added Carcass to his growing playlist of extreme British bands' (Mudrian 2004, p. 128), broadcasting Carcass's music nationwide, before declaring the record 'his favorite album of 1988 in the English newspaper *The Observer*' (p. 132). Slightly later that year, Napalm Death released their second album, *From Enslavement to Obliteration* (1988), the relative commercial success of which 'was aided by the ever capricious British press, who granted the band extensive coverage in *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, and also awarded them a cover story in a November edition of *New Music Express* [*sic*]' (p. 134). Indeed, coverage from mainstream music media was soon followed by increased record sales for the previously little-known bands. 'Napalm knocked fucking Sonic Youth out of the number one position in the independent charts with *Enslavement*, which sold, straight away, something like 35,000' (Napalm Death guitarist Mitch Harris in Mudrian 2004, pp. 132-134). Of course, the artefacts themselves had not changed, nor had the artists who produced the recordings, but extreme metal music was now more accessible than before: one could hear grindcore on the radio, and learn about the latest Earache release in mainstream music publications.

Crucially, as the underground became more accessible in a literal sense, it was somewhat demystified, changing perceptions of those listeners unaccustomed to extreme metal. 'Maybe John Peel made it seem more pretentious than three kids in a crazy cheap studio in Birmingham making a racket with bad production. […] Regardless, he made it more palatable when he gave it the seal of approval' (Carcass vocalist/bassist Jeff Walker in Mudrian 2004, p. 132). Peel's status as a gatekeeper for exciting new music meant that those listeners who were hearing grindcore for the first time were listening to it with the received knowledge that this music has some value, as ascribed by Peel. In both the literal act of broadcasting this music to non-specialised listeners and in the perceptual act of positioning the music as something worthy of one's time, Peel mainstreamed grindcore. Here, we must recall Huber's comments about the geographical and temporal limits of mainstream and underground constructs. In other words, grindcore was mainstreamed for a short period of time (ca. 1988-90) in a specific location (Great Britain), after which, we might say it regressed back into the underground or, more accurately, the genre was once again repositioned in the continual reconstruction and renewal of undergrounds and mainstreams.

Selling Out

Despite the differences in scale and agency, mainstreaming and selling out share the trait of movement from accepted to unaccepted. For the most part, metal/hardcore participants respond negatively to what they perceive as artists selling out or genres being mainstreamed, however the reasons for that reaction vary. A key theme of the relationship between mainstreams and undergrounds in metal/hardcore music (as elsewhere) is that of the personal. Put simply, many participants feel a personal connection to music when it is underground (as noted by Dawes 2014), while mainstream music culture strikes these participants as impersonal. Haenfler quotes an online commenter posting in response to the inaugural Sounds of the Underground tour in 2005,[231]

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[231] Haenfler adequately describes the Sounds of the Underground tour as 'a hardcore/metal bill similar to Ozzfest' (2006, p. 172). One date of the tour was recorded for a DVD (Spangenberg 2006).

who expresses his/her view that 'it always kinda sucks when bands and moreover an entire genre of music that's a personal part of your life move into the mainstream. It's like something is taken away from you' (2006, p. 172).

This loss of personal association is not necessarily wholesale: 'at some point you need to just accept that the thing that you love may get more popular or have elements of it co-opted by other genres' (Bayer 2014). Jonah Bayer directs his comments toward metal 'elitists' who scold anyone they deem to be involved in co-opting aspects of their genre (culture) to be employed in the mainstream. Cory Van der Pol responds to Bayer's article by contending that '[n]ot a single elitist has argued against bands appropriating black metal technique, so long as they do it in their same camp. The point of elitism is to keep out impostors' (Van der Pol 2014). Bayer perceives elitists as deliberately stifling the creativity and commercial appeal of certain musics, in this case black metal, in order to avoid elements of the underground being appropriated by the mainstream. By contrast, Van der Pol praises elitists for 'trying to preserve their way of doing things which is different from what the herd wants to do' (2014), defending the underground against infiltration by the mainstream. Ultimately, 'the herd wants to appropriate the mantle of these rebellious groups while continuing — underneath the aesthetic — to do exactly what the herd always does. In this case, they want to dumb down black metal into emo/indie/shoegaze/rock. That's why people hate Deafheaven' (Van der Pol 2014). The crux of Van der Pol's argument, then, is the space a band like Deafheaven inhabit and the way they are discussed. He sees Deafheaven as impostors, a non-black metal band that are attempting to infiltrate the black metal genre. Despite his aspersions toward Bayer, Van der Pol agrees that a mainstream artist (Deafheaven) has co-opted elements of black metal and should therefore be kept away from the very genre it is co-opting, whereas Bayer classifies Deafheaven as black metal, and people like Van der Pol as having a myopic view on the confines of the genre.

For some black metal participants, Deafheaven were never likely to be accepted as part of black metal and, in the minds of those participants, as part of the underground. Members of the band avoid donning the corpsepaint and

leather clothing of more traditional black metal bands,[232] their music clearly exhibits influences from outside traditional black metal,[233] and the band entertain mainstream (i.e. non-metal) press.[234] Whereas Deafheaven provide something of an easy target for those claiming outsiders are infiltrating the underground, what about those bands that move from acceptable to unacceptable? Selling out carries with it associations of art becoming commodity, artists limiting their creativity and innovation in favour of producing work that will be generally acceptable to most people (or, at least, more people than before), and, most damning, of artists abandoning both their principles and their fans in search of financial windfall. Within metal/hardcore one of the primary indicators of a band selling out is an overt stylistic change, most often sonic but also visual, verbal, or ideological. As intimated in the preceding discussion of mainstreaming extreme metal, bands like Entombed, Carcass, and Napalm Death were chastised for a change in musical style that was interpreted by many as making their sound more palatable. By utilising slower tempos, fewer blast-beats, and harmonies derived from NWOBHM, these bands were perceived as releasing music for a wider audience than they had previously. Since the underground thrives upon exclusivity, the perception of inclusive behaviour is suspect.

For many, selling out is 'the process by which bands change their sound for money or musicians target a certain sound expecting it will make money, which is the reverse of the natural artistic method of having a message to communicate and picking the style that best expresses that message' (D. Rosenberg 2015). This definition, in which financial gain is juxtaposed with artistic integrity, is exemplary of the way in which many metal/hardcore participants conceptualise selling out. It requires both an artist changing aspects of their style in some identifiable manner, as well as the perception from other metal/hardcore participants (primarily fans and critics) that the

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[232] See, for instance, video footage the band's live performance at Pitchfork Music Festival 2014 (Pitchfork 2014).

[233] Reviews of Deafheaven's second album and commercial breakthrough, *Sunbather* (2013), note the influence of shoegaze (Ringo 2013a) and post-rock (Karim 2013).

[234] See, for instance, interviews with Deafheaven in *The Guardian* (Chick 2015) and *Rolling Stone* (Epstein 2015).

impetus for such change has more to do with money than anything else. Those bands that 'target a certain sound expecting it will make money' are better described as examples of artists who '"sell in" by preaching to the converted' (D. Rosenberg 2015), following templates laid out by sell outs. However, there are other reasons artists might sell out. Though it may yield greater financial rewards, movement from underground metal to mainstream metal is still moving from a particularly small market to a market that is significantly larger but remains limited (it is hardly comparable to moving to mainstream popular music in monetary terms).

Instead of commercial success being the incentive for selling out, Vijay Prozak considers any financial reward a by-product of 'the underlying mechanism of the sell-out, which is not so much profitable – since it exists as attempt without certainty of reward – as it is *sociable*' (2015; original emphasis). Put simply, these artists change style and perhaps even generic affiliation in order to receive plaudits from metal/hardcore media and from fans. Prozak suggests that '[s]elling out is offering a product that is designed to please more people by giving to them what they already think they want' (2015). The most successful at this tactic are those artists that retain some of their initial subcultural capital even after they have transitioned to a fully mainstream phenomenon (perhaps two of the most obvious examples being Metallica and Eminem).

The sell out epithet may be applied to an artist regardless of their supposed intentions if the band's stylistic change is interpreted as a move toward the mainstream. Despite the variety one encounters when experiencing various metal/hardcore genres, there are a few elements of style that are commonly understood as indicative of mainstream metal/hardcore. Discussing the music of All That Remains, Andy Synn offers a (relatively) succinct list of mainstream metal tropes:

> Unfortunately, bit by bit, all the hard edges have been smoothed and softened, making things more formulaic and easier to swallow, while the (incredibly autotuned) vocals and melodies have steadily become poppier and more predictable, coupled with the sort of generic "stand up and fight / I'm so sorry / I miss you so much" lyrics that are about one backing dancer away from being a Beyonce tune. It's all very empowering and positive and uplifting… and utterly derivative (Synn 2014).

Synn's principle issue with All That Remains is that, from his perspective, their music has become less extreme over time through the addition and ever-increasing use of clean vocals, simplifying riffs to utilise more standardised melody, more formulaic compositions, and basic lyrical themes. In short, All That Remains have moved closer to mainstream music. Certainly, comparing All That Remains' earlier work to more recent releases confirms stylistic changes. The band's first two albums, *Behind Silence and Solitude* (2002) and *This Darkened Heart* (2004), might be most accurately described as melodic death metal mixed with metalcore, while *The Fall of Ideals* (2006) positioned the band alongside metalcore contemporaries by incorporating prominent clean vocals (especially during choruses) and breakdown sections. By contrast, on *A War You Cannot Win* (2012), the most recent album the band had released prior to Synn's article, All That Remains' style was more akin to heavy metal – slower tempos, majority clean vocals, and a clear emphasis on the chorus hook. Singles like 'Stand Up' and 'What If I Was Nothing' were written with professional songwriters who have experience writing non-metal music, an unusual practice in metal/hardcore.

Synn's final comment about All That Remains' music becoming 'utterly derivative' is particularly significant because it feeds into the ideology of mainstream as homogeneous or homogenising. One of the ways Synn can be sure All That Remains have sold out is because the band's music has, to his ears at least, become more like other mainstream music. Synn's justification for claiming All That Remains as mainstream goes beyond the sonic artefact. Citing a Facebook post by All That Remains vocalist Phil Labonte, in which he suggests that his band have 'transcended "metal"' (in Synn 2014), Synn argues that Labonte's language deliberately insults metal/hardcore in order to subordinate the genre. Labonte shoulders the blame for All That Remains

selling out, as Synn ponders 'how the rest of the band, who at one point at least were definitely "metal musicians", feel about Labonte's concerted focus on simplifying and dumbing down their sound for mass appeal' (2014). In isolation, specific stylistic changes can signify various things, but taken alongside the kind of comments made by Labonte they become indicative of a deliberate strategy to alter the sound of the band not for artistic reasons, but to please more people and make more money.

God Forbid guitarist, Doc Coyle (2015a), cites examples of artists who have changed their style but largely avoided accusations of selling out, highlighting the significance of perceived artist intentions: 'Mastodon is probably the perfect example of how to evolve without alienating old fans. I don't even think their evolution was pre-meditated, and that's why it probably worked' (2015a). Mastodon's move from sludge metal (on debut album, *Remission*, 2002) to progressive metal/rock (*Once More 'Round the Sun*, 2014) appears to many fans, Coyle included, as something of a natural evolution of the band's sound, rather than as an artificial change made for profit. The fact that Mastodon seem to have changed their sound in such a way as to incorporate clean vocals, standard song structure, and less guitar/bass distortion, without losing subcultural capital would appear to be based entirely on the notion of intentionality. By any other measure, Mastodon are mainstream. The band have enjoyed three consecutive albums debut in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart (Hartmann 2017), have accumulated five Grammy Award nominations,[235] and are signed to a major label. Mastodon inhabit a literal mainstream and would certainly qualify as mainstream metal, yet they have retained most of the subcultural capital accrued as an underground band.

Rhetorical Tensions as Creative Apparatus

While some genres claim progressive principles as intrinsic, the most overt example being progressive metal, other genres become associated with a focus on tradition. Such a focus may be found in much hardcore discourse, in which the supposed principles of the genre ought to be upheld by each

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[235] https://www.grammy.com/grammys/artists/mastodon (accessed 22/12/2017).

generation of participants in order to be passed on to the next. The significance of tradition within hardcore music is manifest most explicitly in lyrics to songs by bands like Madball and Terror. Songs like 'R.A.H.C.' (*Empire*, 2010)[236] and 'True School' (*Hardcore Lives*, 2014) position Madball and bands like them as combating a loss of tradition in hardcore music culture. Terror's 'The New Blood' (*Keepers of the Faith*, 2010) affirms the band's relationship with hardcore, vocalist Scott Vogel ending each chorus with the line, 'This is commitment, I'm forever yours', making his allegiance explicit during the middle eight, 'Hardcore's running through my veins; without you, who the fuck would I be?'. The underground as part of hardcore tradition is well established (see above), but Vogel is quick to expand upon the specifics of hardcore tradition when afforded the opportunity. In interviews (Shaw 2013), guest articles (Vogel 2015a, 2015b), and onstage with Terror (Rosenberg 2012a; Lambgoat 2012), Vogel frequently articulates what he understands as hardcore tradition and occasionally criticises bands whom he believes are not hardcore because they ignore that tradition.

In an interview promoting the upcoming release of Terror's fifth album, *Live by the Code* (2013), Vogel was asked what constitutes hardcore's code: 'there isn't a written set of rules. I just think as someone that's a member of underground music, whether it's real hip hop or real metal or real hardcore, you're not accepting what's fed to you in the mainstream' (in Shaw 2013). Vogel immediately draws internal generic distinctions, implying that 'real hardcore' is part of the underground and is therefore opposed to the mainstream, in so doing conjuring a notion of what might be called fake hardcore. He goes on to contend that participants within a musical underground engage with music in a different manner to their mainstream counterparts, suggesting that the former group take an active approach by buying physical artefacts to get the full experience of a hardcore recording, while the latter might illegally download music to listen to passively while undertaking another activity.[237] Again, there is a demarcation

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[236] Madball vocalist Freddy Cricien expands the initialism 'R.A.H.C.' during the song's bridge, singing 'We are the real American hardcore' (*Empire*, 2010, 1:16-1:21).

[237] While Vogel provides no evidence for these claims, he has spoken previously about the importance of physical artefacts within hardcore, particularly lyric sheets (in Peterson 2009, p. 20).

between underground and mainstream, but the practices described by Vogel also constitute part of hardcore tradition.

Vogel stipulates another practice essential to hardcore tradition by stating that 'what really defines a hardcore band really isn't so much their sound, it's the people in the band and how the[y] carry themselves […] if you're in a hardcore band, it's important for you to be out and supportive of other bands, other shows and be involved' (in Shaw 2013). The idea of supporting the scene is prevalent in much hardcore discourse, but Vogel's positioning of this practice as more significant to hardcore tradition than musical style is crucial to our conception of internal tensions. When Vogel refers to 'bullshit bands like The Ghost Inside that claim they're hardcore when they don't even know what hardcore is' (in Lambgoat 2012), or chastises Refused during their reunion tour (Rosenberg 2012a), he is not doing so based on either band's musical style.[238] Rather, Vogel's issue with these artists is their apparent breaking with hardcore tradition by not supporting the scene – members of The Ghost Inside are supposedly guilty of not attending local hardcore shows when the opportunity arises, while Refused's reunion is ostensibly based on making money. The fact that Vogel made disparaging comments about other hardcore bands onstage during Terror gigs is significant, since he is addressing both a captive and receptive audience, he is policing the scene from within. Or, to put it another way, he is simultaneously restating an aspect of hardcore tradition to hardcore participants, and positioning himself as a true believer in that tradition.

Vogel's perspective on hardcore tradition as privileging scenic action over aspects of style such that any band could be hardcore provided they adhere to its scenic tradition is in keeping with broader conceptions of the underground. Vogel observes as much when commenting that supporting the scene by buying music and attending gigs 'is part of the underground. If you're a bunch of hardcore kids and your [*sic*] making music, even if it steps outside the box of what is so called traditional hardcore, I think it still keeps it hardcore' (Vogel in

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[238] Vogel's comments on both The Ghost Inside and Refused were made while onstage during Terror concerts in 2012, the former in Leeds, UK, and the latter in Meerhout, Belgium during the Groezrock festival (headlined that year by Refused).

Shaw 2013). In order to be a 'hardcore kid', one must be steeped in the tradition of the genre both ideologically and pragmatically, actively participating in the scene. That said, Vogel is also clearly concerned with stylistic aspects of hardcore:

> [T]he word hardcore has been expanded, stretched, perverted and raped so much that when someone says to me they're in a hardcore band, I don't even know what that means anymore. I don't know if that means it sounds like Agnostic Front, Emmure or something in between (Vogel in Shaw 2013).

It is hardly surprising that Vogel suggests on the one hand that hardcore is *not* based on sonic style, while simultaneously arguing that the term does confer aspects of style on the other (we've seen genre appear contradictory before). Most interesting for our present discussion is the idea that hardcore might be understood to encompass music as dissimilar as Agnostic Front and Emmure. This suggests that within the stringent hardcore tradition there is nevertheless room for (overt) progression or, at the very least, development. Vogel recalls a time when the term 'hardcore' fell out of vogue because of a perception that 'it was going [to] keep you boxed in' (in Shaw 2013), such were the superficial constraints of style and ideology connoted by the genre name. However, 'over time with bands like Every Time I Die and 18 Visions' who 'expanded the sound of hardcore so much and […] opened it up to so many different people' (Vogel in Shaw 2013), hardcore nomenclature regained some prominence. While this allowed for something of a resurgence in popularity for hardcore, it also resulted in a younger generation of participants whose knowledge of supposedly seminal hardcore bands was lacking: 'I can meet a kid who considers himself a hardcore kid who doesn't even know who Agnostic Front is, and to me that's a bad thing. You ask me if it's good or bad, that's a fucking horrible thing' (Vogel in Shaw 2013). Ostensibly, then, bands like Eighteen Visions and Every Time I Die did the genre a favour by expanding what might be considered hardcore music, reenergising a tired formula, and repopulating a stagnant fan base. However, such a development also resulted in numerous hardcore fans participating in the genre who have little to no knowledge of some of its founding texts; that is, hardcore participants who are not sufficiently familiar with hardcore tradition. The progressive attitude of these bands (Vogel also cites

Quicksand as having broadened the scope of hardcore during the early 1990s) forced the hardcore genre to adapt to include new stylistic traits, thereby altering part of hardcore tradition. It is in response to these changes that bands like Terror may position themselves as upholding part of hardcore's stylistic tradition. In much the same way that the underground requires a mainstream against which to define itself, so too does tradition require progression.

As before with black metal, one of the underlying reasons for wanting to protect a genre's tradition (especially if part of that tradition is a connection to the underground) is the existential threat that the thing one knows to be, say, hardcore is no longer hardcore. For Vogel and many others, it matters that some bands who refer to themselves as hardcore do not support the scene in a literal sense, regardless of stylistic traits, because it is perceived to be evidence of a genre adaptation that phases out specific, significant aspects of tradition. Returning to the metaphor of symbiosis, this interpretation of the relationship between progression and tradition might be understood as parasitic: simply, progression is killing tradition by ignoring it. However, one could understand Terror's use of the tradition/progression relationship as an example of mutualism: faced with losing the tradition they hold dear, Terror's band members continually reaffirm the importance of that very tradition. The significance of tradition to contemporary hardcore life is articulated explicitly during the verse to 'Live by the Code' (*Live by the Code*, 2013): 'We've kept traditions, held with clear aims. Respect the roots, but we live for today'.

Vogel offers a more overt example of an artist utilising the creative apparatus of internal tensions when discussing hardcore band Hatebreed.[239] In a guest article for *Metal Injection*, Vogel provides a list of ten things that he feels have changed in hardcore since the formation of Terror in 2002 (Vogel 2015a).[240] Of

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[239] The generic status of Hatebreed is somewhat contentious. Some participants consider the band to be hardcore, while others refer to them as metalcore, a topic to which I return in chapter six. My interest in this section lies not with the accuracy (or lack thereof) in asserting that Hatebreed are a hardcore band, but in how such an assertion affects relevant issues of internal tensions.

[240] Vogel's full list of '10 Things that have Changed in Hardcore': '(1) Lyrical Breakdown, (2) Big Business, (3) Gas Prices Rise and Rise, (4) What Does Hardcore Mean Anymore?, (5)

these ten, we might consider four as concerning issues of tradition/progression explicitly. Three of Vogel's points position contemporary hardcore's apparent move away from hardcore tradition as negative. Vogel complains that hardcore bands no longer have a clear, interesting message ('Lyrical Breakdown'), that they get into the music for the wrong reasons ('Death of Ethics'), and that the term 'hardcore' has little connotative value ('What Does Hardcore Mean Anymore?'). Vogel's position is clear: contemporary hardcore bands no longer value or uphold the genre's traditions, to the detriment of hardcore. This sentiment becomes muddied, however, when Vogel notes the significance of Hatebreed's commercial and critical success ('Broken Down Walls').

Hatebreed 'shattered all the expectations and limitation[s] of what a hardcore band can do. They expanded their fan base well past the hardcore scene without changing their look or sound' (Vogel 2015a), as well as signing to a major label for *Perseverance* (2002) and *The Rise of Brutality* (2003) and being nominated for a Grammy in 2005 (Lambgoat 2004). Hatebreed's debut album, *Satisfaction is the Death of Desire* (1997), is included among Vogel's '10 most important hardcore albums' (Vogel 2015b), positioning the Connecticut band alongside luminaries like Agnostic Front and Madball. For Vogel, Hatebreed are a band that have successfully altered the boundaries of hardcore without losing subcultural capital within the hardcore scene. They have released music through a major label, received a Grammy nomination, had their music feature in movies,[241] and vocalist Jamey Jasta hosted MTV2's *Headbanger's Ball* (2003-07). By any literal measure, Hatebreed are a mainstream band. And yet, as Vogel attests, they have retained their status within hardcore. They have accomplished this thanks in part to a stylistic dedication to hardcore tradition: Hatebreed's composition, performance, and even production styles have remained relatively stable throughout their career, with virtually all of the band's songs based around simple, heavy riffs, hard-hitting drums, breakdowns, and

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Death of Ethics, (6) Broken Down Walls, (7) The Mall of Merch, (8) Everybody's on Tour, Always, (9) DIY is There for the Taking, and (10) Vinyl Back on Top' (Vogel 2015a).
[241] 'I Will be Heard', originally released on *Perseverance* (2002), was featured on the soundtrack to *xXx* (Various Artists 2002), and 'Bound to Violence', originally released on *The Rise of Brutality* (2003), was featured on the soundtrack to *The Punisher* (Various Artists 2004b).

gang-chant mosh parts. Even when signed to a major label like Universal, Hatebreed were not perceived to have sold out by changing their music to appease the label.

Similar to Mastodon, Hatebreed have managed to negotiate the internal tensions between mainstream and underground, and between tradition and progression, primarily by appearing to do so naturally. Whereas Mastodon seem naturally inclined to alter their music with every album, such is the tradition of the progressive metal genre, Hatebreed refine their style with each album, thereby adhering to part of the hardcore tradition. Hatebreed's position as a mainstream metal/hardcore band should disbar them from retaining the hardcore moniker according to a strict reading of hardcore tradition in which the underground is sacred. Instead, Hatebreed have utilised the internal tensions of mainstream/underground and tradition/progression to adapt the very genre of hardcore. For, if Hatebreed are a hardcore band that are nonetheless mainstream, then hardcore as underground is no longer an exacting specification. In remaining 'true' to a stylistic hardcore tradition while also enjoying commercial and critical success, Hatebreed have altered the hardcore paradigm from within, employing the genre's traditions in a progressive way.

Conclusion

Musical genres do not exist in isolation, but are constructed in relation to one another. We might understand this environment as based on the interaction between ostensibly mutually exclusive ideologies. The internal creative apparatus provided by rhetorical tensions like those between mainstream and underground, and between tradition and progression, affords both the literal and ideological preservation of generic norms *and* the generation of new ideas and practices. Metal/hardcore can never be truly mainstream as it would lose its generic identity, but it can also never be wholly underground because of extant institutions established precisely to reify this identity. Metal/hardcore can never by totally enveloped by tradition because it would cease to create new artefacts, meanings, and experiences, but it can also never be entirely progressive, as that would render genre a pointless construct. Individually, all

four options threaten the continued existence of metal/hardcore as an active music culture, but the tensions between these concepts promote generic adaptations.

The apparatus described in this chapter is a manifestation of generic symbiosis, providing the site and the mechanism for participants to alter conceptions of metal/hardcore as a music culture. These rhetorical tensions provide a framework for generic change; they set the boundaries in which change may occur such that certain variations are deemed acceptable at a given moment, while others are unacceptable. However, this process is neither unidirectional nor singular. It is not just that genres adapt within this framework of tensions, but also that the framework (indeed, the tensions themselves) adapts to generic change. And while the nomenclature often differs from one cultural environment to another, the continual processes of adaptation occur in multiple genres around the world.

Chapter Six – Metalcore

This chapter examines metalcore and the New Wave of American Heavy Metal (NWOAHM) as a case study of the confluence of numerous related issues discussed in the thesis. Investigating the relationship between metalcore and NWOAHM affords the exploration of metal/hardcore symbiosis, the connection between small- and large-scale phenomena, the intersections of style, scene, and genre, as well as pertinent internal tensions as a creative apparatus. Analysing various conceptions of metalcore reveals a genre that appears both narrowly defined and relatively open to interpretation. Divergent formulations of metalcore emerge primarily as a result of the period of codification the genre experienced during the NWOAHM time/place-focused scene. Understandings of metalcore pre- and post-codification highlight the wide-ranging effects of the metalcore/NWOAHM relationship, pertaining to issues of style, genre, mainstream, and underground (among others). Beyond metalcore, NWOAHM codification has also proven significant in wider discourse on metal/hardcore historiography, further complicating ways in which metal/hardcore music culture is constructed and experienced.

The chapter begins by outlining some of the ways in which metalcore has been defined and understood since the 1990s. Drawing predominantly on journalistic discourse, I compare descriptions and examples of metalcore from a variety of perspectives, noting points of agreement as well as disparity. In so doing, it becomes plain that the majority of metalcore discourse relates to NWOAHM in some fashion. I explore the relationship between metalcore and NWOAHM with a particular interest in those accounts of the former that are inseparable from the latter. With a general background in place, I investigate the codification of metalcore through NWOAHM, focusing on elements of composition and performance. The chapter ends by considering various consequences of codification, noting effects upon metal/hardcore historiography and the generic affiliation of metalcore. Substantial narratives develop around NWOAHM/metalcore that concern more fundamental conceptions of metal/hardcore and the role of genre in shaping a music culture.

What's in a Name?

As we will see, the relationship between metalcore and NWOAHM cannot simply be reduced to a participant's personal preference, nor the fact that some commentators utilise the terms interchangeably while others clearly distinguish one from the other. Terminology used connotes specific ideas about the music in question and, moreover, engenders certain perspectives towards this music in relation to the rest of metal/hardcore culture. For some participants, metalcore refers to a stylistically diverse, amorphous grouping of artists held together only through a shared proclivity for mixing metal and hardcore. For others, however, metalcore is an abject genre (to use Smialek's [2015] term, discussed below) that represents formulaic misappropriation and dilution of metal/hardcore values in the pursuit of commercial gain. Broadly speaking, it is the former group that would likely construe NWOAHM as something related to metalcore but nonetheless differentiated through the new wave's proximity to the mainstream and seeming reification of traditional metal style. By contrast, many of those who denigrate metalcore interpret it as synonymous with NWOAHM, sometimes to the extent that the inclusion of prominent NWOAHM-era stylistic traits in more contemporary artists' music may lead to those bands being tainted with the metalcore brush. Such webs of signification are stimulated whenever a participant encounters relevant terminology in print or hears a specific element of style in a recording. In order to explore how these convoluted perceptions come to be, this section outlines various definitions of both metalcore and NWOAHM, noting differences based upon generic and temporal perspectives. Significantly, many conceptions of metalcore rely to some extent on NWOAHM, and vice versa, positioning them in a dynamic relationship. Bound up in this relationship are various narratives that pertain to metal/hardcore more broadly, the exploration of which offers a framework to understand how individual genres function in relation to larger music cultures. These narratives are explored further later in this chapter, but allusions to them nonetheless permeate the following definitions.

The subject of this chapter has several names: metalcore, the New Wave of American Heavy Metal (NWOAHM), modern metal, screamo, metallic hardcore, among others. Similarly, the subject of the chapter seems to refer to

several different things: metalcore may be a genre (Hill 2015a), a style (Mark Z. 2014), or a scene (Vane-Tempest 2014), while NWOAHM could denote a movement (Berelian 2005; Sharpe-Young 2005). Metallic hardcore may be understood as a subgenre of hardcore (Rios 2015) that eventually transmogrified into a distinct genre, metalcore (Haenfler 2006), or perhaps metalcore emerges from the NWOAHM as a genre of modern metal (Stevens 2013). Similarly, related artists have received multiple genre titles: Killswitch Engage have been described as metalcore (Berelian 2005), NWOAHM (Kahn-Harris 2007), and melodic metalcore (MacLennan 2015), while Hatebreed have been designated as metalcore (Haenfler 2006, p. 168),[242] metallic hardcore (vocalist Jamey Jasta in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 624), and hardcore (Andrew 2015).

Depending on how one conceptualises metalcore, it may have begun during the mid-to-late 1980s alongside crossover, during the early-to-mid '90s after crossover had lost its prominence in the metal/hardcore scene, during the mid-to-late '90s when the hardcore underground began rebelling against the growing mainstream infatuation with nu metal, or even during the first few years of the twenty-first century as a replacement for a then stagnant and overcrowded nu metal genre. Ian Christe positions metalcore as synonymous with crossover, noting that 'in 1987 most new names played a cross-pollinated S.O.D.-style hybrid called metalcore, or simply crossover' (2003, p. 184),[243] a view perhaps shared by Albert Mudrian who claims that in 'December of 1988, a new death metal band called Cannibal Corpse rose from the remains of Buffalo's two largest metalcore groups, Beyond Death and Tirant Sin' (2004, p. 160). Every Time I Die vocalist Keith Buckley contends that '[t]he whole metalcore thing started [in the late eighties and early nineties] with bands like

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[242] It is worth noting that Hatebreed's generic affiliation appears particularly fluid, perhaps as a result of the changing connotations of the 'metalcore' moniker post-codification. For example, Haenfler describes Hatebreed as hardcore when discussing the band in relation to Cro-Mags and Madball (2006, p. 128), but later designates Hatebreed as a metalcore band when noting their commercial success alongside Killswitch Engage (p. 168).

[243] Christe's 'genre box' on metalcore (2003, p. 181) lists a number of albums that are most often understood as central to crossover (as noted in chapter two), including S.O.D.'s *Speak English or Die* (1985), Corrosion of Conformity's *Animosity* (1985), and Cro-Mags' *The Age of Quarrel* (1986).

Earth Crisis, Deadguy, Converge, Coalesce, and Cave In' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 557; square brackets in original), similar to journalist Ryan Downey's opinion that the 'first true metalcore band was [Cleveland, Ohio's] Integrity, which drew equally from Cro-Mags and Judge. They formed in 1988' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 558; square brackets in original). Metalcore is a more recent genre according to J. Andrew, who asserts that '[b]etween 1997 and 2002, a string of influential records came out which would lay the groundwork for the metalcore style' (2015), going on to list albums by Shai Hulud, Vision of Disorder, Cave In, Botch, Poison the Well, From Autumn to Ashes, and Converge.[244] That groundwork bore fruit in the first years of the new millennium after 'the seeds were planted a good two or three decades ago and bands like As I Lay Dying, Killswitch Engage and Atreyu ran with it and wound up charting in the Billboard 200' (Vane-Tempest 2014).

As mentioned in chapter two, those metal/hardcore historians that provide specific timeframes for metalcore rarely agree. Sam Dunn's (2005) metalcore period runs 1985-present, Wiederhorn and Turman's chapter on metalcore covers 1992-2006 (2013, p. 557), Haenfler's metalcore period encompasses 1998-2006 (2006, p. 219), and Smialek's conception of metalcore as an abject genre runs circa 2004-present (2015, p. 293). That each of these authors proffer a different timeframe for metalcore suggests that their conceptions of the genre vary. Smialek considers metalcore to continue into the present whereas Wiederhorn and Turman provide an endpoint that broadly coincides with their claim that deathcore arose during 2007 (2013, p. 502), not to mention Vane-Tempest's contention that 'in 2007, The Devil Wears Prada released *Plagues* and things started to go horribly wrong' (2014). At the other end of the spectrum, it is notable that the authors disagree on a start date for metalcore. Dunn's metalcore begins at the same time as crossover, but Wiederhorn and Turman's metalcore begins in the same year as crossover ended by their own

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[244] Shai Hulud's *Hearts Once Nourished with Hope and Compassion* (1997), Vision of Disorder's *Imprint* (1998), Cave In's *Until Your Heart Stops* (1998), Botch's *We Are the Romans* (1999), Poison the Well's *The Opposite of December* (1999), From Autumn to Ashes' *Too Bad You're Beautiful* (2001), and Converge's *Jane Doe* (2001).

estimation. Of particular interest is Smialek's comparatively late start date for metalcore, explained thus:

> [A]malgamations of metal and punk had been happening for decades—indeed many histories and taxonomies include bands from the 1980s and '90s under 'metalcore'—but it was not until around 2003 and 2004 when a definable scene that consistently referred to itself and was referred to by others as 'metalcore' succeeded nu metal as the most popular strain of metal music in North America (Smialek 2015, p. 79).

The distinction Smialek draws is crucial to conceptions of genre: self-identification. Whereas other authors interpret certain bands or artefacts from the late twentieth century as part of early metalcore, Smialek observes that the term metalcore only became properly definable and identifiable around 2003/4. These specific years were not chosen at random: they encompass two of the peak years of what is commonly known as the New Wave of American Heavy Metal. By asserting that metalcore began with NWOAHM, Smialek does not dismiss those various participants who claim metalcore existed prior to 2003/4; rather, he implies that metalcore became codified and, in that sense, defined during NWOAHM in a way that it was not beforehand. In short, NWOAHM changed metalcore.

Metalcore and (the) New Wave of American Heavy Metal

The significance of NWOAHM to metalcore is evidenced through the near ubiquity of the former in discussions of the latter. Indeed, even those scholars who construct metalcore as distinct from NWOAHM nonetheless cite examples of metalcore artists that have some relation to the new wave. Authors like Haenfler (2006), Leslie Simon (2009), and Gabriel Kuhn (2010) discuss metalcore in relation to broader discussions of hardcore,[245] thereby interpreting metalcore as an extension of hardcore, of hardcore incorporating various influences from metal. Haenfler defines metalcore as a 'hybrid genre', citing example artists Throwdown, Hatebreed, Unearth, and Poison the Well (2006, p. 16), and provides an era for metalcore – 1998-2006 – as part of his 'Timeline

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[245] Simon's (2009) book is not on hardcore exclusively, but nonetheless includes brief mentions of metalcore as a variant of hardcore (pp. 122-124).

of Straight Edge Bands' (pp. 218-219).[246] Unearth have a particularly strong affiliation to NWOAHM, being described as such by multiple authors (Mark Z. 2014; Rees 2014; Andrew 2015; Hill 2015a), while Hatebreed have been discussed as catalysts for NWOAHM (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013). Kahn-Harris understands metalcore as 'based on the cross-fertilization between [metal and hardcore] scenes' (2007, p. 23), which Ibrahim Abraham refines somewhat to position metalcore as 'a cross-over genre, emerging from the confluence of hardcore punk and various forms of heavy metal, notably thrash metal and death metal' (2015, p. 466).

Berelian's conception of metalcore 'involves a quaking fusion of hardcore and heavy metal, though without the by-product of extreme speed' (2005, p. 223). He cites Madball, Hatebreed, and Sick of It All for their 'mid-paced chugging, often referred to as "mosh parts," designed to whip the crowd into a frenzy', but also notes a 'trait among some bands is an adherence to nonstandard song structure, effectively eliminating the usual verse-chorus pattern', here referencing The Dillinger Escape Plan, Converge, and Mastodon (p. 223). Berelian suggests distorted vocals as a 'vital component' of metalcore, while lyrical 'topics often centre upon politics, social commentary and identity', though 'what confuses matters is the image. It is quite likely that a metalcore band will look more like a hardcore outfit […] than a classic metal combo'. This relatively broad definition of metalcore may result from Berelian's recognition that 'the sound is so malleable that it's possible for a band to display metalcore elements and yet sound more metal than hardcore. In other words, the sound covers a wide spectrum, with bands such as Killswitch Engage and Lamb Of God sitting more towards the metal end' (p. 223). Berelian's understanding of metalcore is thus generally similar to those offered by other authors around this time: metalcore appears to emerge from hardcore (the majority of artists he mentions are either hardcore bands or consider themselves heavily connected to hardcore), and is stylistically diverse.

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[246] To the aforementioned list of metalcore bands, Haenfler adds Eighteen Visions, Torn Apart, and Prayer for Cleansing as examples of straight edge metalcore artists (2006, p. 219).

As with texts by Sharpe-Young (2005) and Haenfler (2006), the fact that Berelian will have conducted his research during the NWOAHM period is crucial. He designates Killswitch Engage and Lamb of God – widely discussed by later authors as exemplary of NWOAHM-era metalcore – as toward the metal end of the metalcore spectrum because of 'their thrashier sound and nods to more melodic old school of metal' (Berelian 2005, p. 223), suggesting that notions of metalcore have changed since Berelian authored his book. Indeed, the influences of thrash metal and more melodic traditional metal that lead Berelian to position Killswitch Engage as particularly metal-leaning later became signifiers of metalcore generally, a way to clearly differentiate metalcore from hardcore or deathcore.

The New Wave of American Heavy Metal moniker has been applied to numerous metal/hardcore artists who achieved some commercial success or, at least, visibility to metal/hardcore participants during the first decade of the twenty-first century.[247] Compared to metalcore, NWOAHM has a relatively precise usage history,[248] generally referring to young metal/hardcore artists releasing music during the period ca. 2000-2008 that might be understood as straddling the line between mainstream and underground metal/hardcore. However, such a level of precision has only become apparent in the years since NWOAHM waned in popularity, leading to retrospective articles with titles like 'Whatever happened to the New Wave of American Heavy Metal?' (Rees 2014). Changes in the relationship between metalcore and NWOAHM are most evident when one compares literature published during the new wave period to those more recent articles and books. Texts by Berelian (2005), Sharpe-Young (2005), and Kahn-Harris (2007) offer perspectives on the NWOAHM/metalcore relationship that contrast sharply with those espoused by Wiederhorn and Turman (2013), Rees (2014), and Andrew (2015), lending support to the idea of change through codification. Broadly, the two primary differences between these perspectives may be summarised thus: before codification, NWOAHM

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[247] Joseph Schafer contends that several bands 'were loosely roped together as a movement called the New Wave of American Metal by an article in *Revolver*' (2016), though I am unable to corroborate this claim.
[248] Links between NWOAHM and NWOBHM are explored later.

was distinguishable from metalcore and connoted a diverse group of artists, whereas post-codification, NWOAHM and metalcore became (seemingly) inextricably linked and stylistically homogeneous.

Given its title, one can reasonably expect Garry Sharpe-Young's *New Wave of American Heavy Metal* (2005) to be something of an authoritative text on NWOAHM. The book comprises an alphabetical listing of more than six hundred artists in some way connected to NWOAHM, with each entry including a list of band members, short artist biography, and discography. The sheer volume of bands Sharpe-Young profiles suggests that he understands NWOAHM as spanning a broad range of styles and, significantly, genres. Although he refers to it as a genre during the book's introduction, Sharpe-Young's notion of NWOAHM is more akin to a time/place-focused scene centred upon North America from the early 1990s to present. Given his claim that '[t]he origins of NWoAHM are focused on a crop of post-Grunge acts' (2005, p. xi), one can assume that Sharpe-Young's inclusion of multiple pre-grunge bands is done to give the reader some background to those genres from which NWOAHM draws.[249] Indeed, during this introduction Sharpe-Young hints at the breadth of his version of NWOAHM, citing 'groundbreaking bands such as Pantera, Biohazard, Slipknot and Machine Head' who eventually led to a scene that 'is style wise as wide as it is deep' (p. xi).

> Extremes are borne out by the quite huge Christian Metalcore phenomenon, the unashamed 70s prog of Coheed And Cambria, melodic Death Metal bands, Screamo and sub-Gothique Emocore artists, My Chemical Romance and Alkaline Trio (Sharpe-Young 2005, p. xi).

To avoid confusion while reinforcing his view that NWOAHM incorporates multiple genres, many of the band entries in Sharpe-Young's text include genre titles. Some are straightforward – H2O are a 'New York Hardcore act' (2005, p. 164) – while others are more esoteric – Between the Buried and Me are described as 'an eclectic, Crossover Progressive Death Metal unit' (p. 52). That

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[249] Sharpe-Young (2005) includes entries for hardcore punk bands dating from the late 1970s (Bad Brains, Black Flag, T.S.O.L.), as well as 1980s hardcore/crossover bands (Agnostic Front, Cro-Mags, D.R.I., Minor Threat, Suicidal Tendencies).

Sharpe-Young finds it appropriate to include artists from death metal, black metal, emo/pop punk, sludge metal, nu metal, hardcore, and metalcore (amongst others) in his comprehensive list of NWOAHM bands speaks to the liberal application of 'NWOAHM' during the scene's most popular years. Though Sharpe-Young recognises that while NWOAHM's 'usage has increased, its definition has never truly been nailed down, nor is [it] ever likely to be' (p. xi), the sheer variety included in his book does little to rectify the situation.

Despite highlighting the diversity of NWOAHM, Sharpe-Young nevertheless notes that '[j]ust like the NWoBHM before it, once the levee had broken, a million Metalcore acts surged through' (2005, p. xi), acknowledging the increasingly close relationship between metalcore and NWOAHM. Indeed, among the many genre titles Sharpe-Young utilises, metalcore appears with some regularity.[250] Whereas bands like Atreyu, Bleeding Through, Eighteen Visions, and Lamb of God are discussed widely elsewhere as metalcore artists, bands like Aiden ('Seattle Metalcore / Punk', p. 21) and The Black Dahlia Murder ('Leading Metalcore act', p. 309) evidence a comparatively broad definition of metalcore. Crucially, while Sharpe-Young recognises a connection between metalcore and NWOAHM, he remains of the opinion that one may be distinguished from the other.

Berelian (2005) identifies a similar distinction, though his conception of NWOAHM is significantly narrower than Sharpe-Young's, despite writing around the same time. Berelian's understanding of NWOAHM is much closer to that of more recent authors, contending that 'Chimaira, along with several other bands, such as Killswitch Engage, God Forbid and Shadows Fall, have been lumped into what has been dubbed the New Wave Of American Heavy Metal' (2005, p. 65). While Killswitch Engage occupy a space 'towards the metal end' of metalcore (p. 223), they are simultaneously among a central group of

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[250] As Smialek observes: 'with respect to the tangled relationship between the terms "metalcore" and "NWOAHM," Sharpe-Young [2007] frequently uses the term "metalcore" to refer to bands in his NWOAHM chapter' (Smialek 2015, p. 80). Smialek is here referencing the chapter on NWOAHM in Sharpe-Young (2007), but this chapter is evidently based on research conducted for Sharpe-Young's earlier text (2005).

NWOAHM artists, suggesting stronger ties to the scenic designation than to the generic. Adding to the convolution, Berelian describes Chimaira's *Pass Out of Existence* (2001) as '[h]eavy, pounding and relentless metalcore' (2005, p. 66), while God Forbid's *Reject the Sickness* (1999) 'was metal from the underground, with hardcore adding a frisson to the contemporary sound. Call it metalcore or just a refreshing change' (2005, p. 138). Kahn-Harris clearly observes a distinction between metalcore and NWOAHM when discussing the latter: '[b]ands such as Killswitch Engage and God Forbid have drawn on metalcore (a cross between metal and hardcore) and Swedish death metal to create a music that is becoming increasingly popular worldwide' (2007, p. 105). The notion of NWOAHM referring to metalcore mixed with something else had, in fact, already been suggested by Berelian when he explained Chimaira as 'fusing the fury of thrash, the emotional power of metalcore and the cold precision of modern electronics' (2005, p. 65).

While NWOAHM and metalcore may have been distinguishable during the NWOAHM period, more recent commentary suggests that the two terms have become largely synonymous. Although Rees recognises that '[s]tylistically the NWOAHM cast a fairly large net […] seemingly if you were an upcoming band from the States who could play a bit, you were in', he also contends that 'like all movements before and since, the NWOAHM soon became old hat as successive legions of acts saturated bills and column inches with the same formula' (2014). In much the same way that NWOAHM may be understood as codifying metalcore, it would appear the inverse is true. Andrew argues that 'NWOAHM shouldn't just be reduced to "metalcore." Bands as diverse as The Red Chord, The Black Dahlia Murder, Every Time I Die and Norma Jean all came to prominence around this time' (2015),[251] even if other authors despair at 'so many identikit bands watering down […] As I Lay Dying tunes and often being victims of style over substance' (Rees 2014). NWOAHM's codification of metalcore thus results in both becoming reducible to a few relatively specific

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[251] Further highlighting the link between NWOAHM and metalcore, each of these bands receive entries in Sharpe-Young (2005), though The Black Dahlia Murder are considered metalcore (p. 309).

example artists and artefacts; metalcore has become synonymous with NWOAHM, just as NWOAHM has become synonymous with metalcore.

While Wiederhorn and Turman give the dates for their metalcore chapter as 1992-2006, they focus on a narrower timeframe. Specifically, the chapter begins by referencing 'a batch of bands' who came to prominence during 'the early 2000s' (2013, p. 557). These artists 'combined thrash and death metal rhythms, virtuosic guitar leads reminiscent of Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, and vocals that veered from ferocious hardcore to soaring melodic eighties metal' (p. 557). Although the authors cite this emergence as coming '[a]fter nearly a decade of gestation', the focus is nevertheless squarely placed on bands that were popular during NWOAHM: 'Killswitch Engage, All That Remains, Shadows Fall, Underoath, Atreyu, and Avenged Sevenfold arose from the underground and gained varying degrees of mainstream acclaim' (p. 557). Moreover, while the chapter itself does indeed spend time discussing the origins of bands from two significant time/place-focused scenes (one in New England and the other in Southern California), this subsection of the chapter provides context, appearing primarily as a background to NWOAHM (since some prominent NWOAHM bands were engaged in metal/hardcore during the 1990s).[252] The title of Wiederhorn and Turman's metalcore chapter – 'When Darkness Falls: Metalcore, 1992-2006' – clearly incorporates artists and artefacts from the 1990s; however, the significance of NWOAHM-era metalcore remains evident. In keeping with the rest of the book, the chapter is named after a particular song, but if we understand Killswitch Engage's 'When Darkness Falls' (*The End of Heartache*, 2004) as representative of metalcore generally, then the kind of metalcore Wiederhorn and Turman evoke is clearly that of the NWOAHM era. Furthermore, the authors' timeline for metalcore ends when the NWOAHM scene is commonly understood to have waned (Vane-Tempest 2014), implying that metalcore had become firmly connected to NWOAHM by that time, even if the former existed prior to the latter.

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[252] Commercially successful NWOAHM artists based in these time/place-focused scenes mentioned by Wiederhorn and Turman (2013) include Killswitch Engage, Shadows Fall, and All That Remains from New England, and Eighteen Visions, Atreyu, Avenged Sevenfold, and Bleeding Through from California.

An inextricable connection between NWOAHM and metalcore is reinforced when Wiederhorn and Turman explore 'millennial metal' in their final chapter (2013, p. 615-679). Here, bands often associated with NWOAHM/metalcore (Hatebreed, Lamb of God, Mastodon) are grouped alongside artists with little or no relationship to the scene/genre (Tool, Slipknot, System of a Down). These bands share a chapter in part because of the timing of their formative years in relation to commercial success – with the exceptions of Tool and Machine Head, each of the bands profiled formed during the 1990s before enjoying mainstream attention during the twenty-first century – but also because of their relative lack of specific (sub)genre affiliation. Wiederhorn and Turman note that '[a]long with Lamb of God and High on Fire, Mastodon was tagged by the press as one of the three great hopes for an emerging New American Metal movement—a nod to the New Wave of British Heavy Metal' (2013, p. 657), but the authors nevertheless avoid conflating New American Metal with NWOAHM or metalcore. While Hatebreed and Lamb of God are mentioned in the earlier metalcore chapter, positioning 'New American Metal' in its own section underlines the inseparable nature of the NWOAHM/metalcore relationship.

The New Wave of American Heavy Metal phrase is borrowed directly from the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, but the two scenes share more than a name. First coined by *Sounds* editor Alan Lewis,[253] NWOBHM was popularised by critic Geoff Barton as 'a hybrid that appropriated the capacity of "New Wave" to embody the cutting edge and applied it to a genre seen to be anything but the state of the art at the moment' (Waksman 2009, p. 173). Both terms were created by critics to describe a movement or scene of various artists who emanated from the same country, emerged into the mainstream (of metal and further afield) around the same time, and shared a sense of originality. Like its later American counterpart, constructing an exact timeline for NWOBHM is difficult: Waksman first suggests that the scene lasted from '1979 to 1983'

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[253] Lewis created the New Wave of British Heavy Metal phrase 'to recognize an audience of fans and potential readers who were not being well served by the editorial perspectives at the other leading British music weeklies, *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express*' (Waksman 2009, p. 175).

(2009, p. 173), but later acknowledges that 'the initial enthusiasm had largely dissipated by 1981, but new bands continued to emerge well after that date' (p. 330). Similar to the experience of Avenged Sevenfold and Trivium with NWOAHM, bands like Def Leppard and Iron Maiden, who were 'initially associated with the movement began to realize success on a larger scale only afterwards' (p. 330). Just as NWOAHM codified metalcore such that each is perceived by some as being reducible to a few artists and particular elements of style, the early variety of NWOBHM has largely been forgotten in the years since, resulting in the term being generally synonymous with artists like Iron Maiden and Judas Priest. The influence of NWOBHM on melodic death metal provides an indirect link between the two scenes, and parallels between NWOAHM and NWOBHM may also be observed in larger narratives regarding mainstream appeal and stylistic boundaries.

One of the few academic texts to consider metalcore, Smialek (2015) offers two striking points of interest for our discussion. First, metalcore is variously described as 'an umbrella term for deathcore, NWOAHM, and screamo' (p. 252), and 'as something of a meta-category involving multiple genres, each with its own history' (p. 293). Second, metalcore is positioned as one of Smialek's 'abject' genres alongside glam and nu metal (see below). For our present purposes, his first claim is most noteworthy as it establishes NWOAHM as something akin to a subgenre of metalcore, in a similar bracket to deathcore and screamo, both of which 'function as subgenres of metalcore as a meta-category' (2015, p. 294). Despite this designation, the significance of NWOAHM to Smialek's understanding of metalcore becomes clear when he positions the genre as abject. Abject genres 'can be thought of as moments in time when metal music became increasingly visible to an audience outside of metal subculture: glam metal (ca. 1985–1991), nu metal (ca. 1997–2002), and metalcore (ca. 2004–present)' (2015, p. 293). While recognising the existence of metalcore (or, at least, of artists mixing metal and hardcore) prior to 2004, Smialek nonetheless points to the NWOAHM period as the beginning of metalcore as an identifiable genre both within and without metal/hardcore. He acknowledges that metalcore can be 'an especially slippery term' (2015, p. 79), citing instances of overlap between metalcore, NWOAHM, and screamo in

historiographies by Dunn (2005), Sharpe-Young (2007), and Patrick Galbraith's Map of Metal (Smialek 2015, p. 80).[254] Providing examples of artists who have been conceptualised as both metalcore and NWOAHM (or metalcore and screamo) simultaneously, Smialek hints at the extent to which NWOAHM and metalcore have become largely synonymous, demonstrating the power of NWOAHM to redefine (some of) the parameters of metalcore.

Mentions of metalcore in texts by Weinstein (2000), Christe (2003), and Haenfler (2006) make no mention of the significance of mixing clean and distorted vocals by metalcore bands, yet virtually all writing on metalcore post-NWOAHM cites this compositional/performance-based trait as essential to the genre.[255] Jeremy Vane-Tempest may seem flippant in his dismissal of pre-NWOAHM metalcore when asserting that he 'could delve into the hardcore punk and thrash metal crossover of the 1980s and the metallic hardcore of the late 1990s, but frankly, that stuff is really boring' (2014), but such an assertion is nevertheless reflective of NWOAHM's impact. For Vane-Tempest, the import of NWOAHM is so immense that discussion of metalcore pre-new wave is moot; metalcore *is* the genre that emerged during NWOAHM. With this in mind, it is worth considering how processes of codification influence genre constructs and how NWOAHM, in particular, may be understood as codifying metalcore.

Codification (of a Genre)

To say that the NWOAHM period codified metalcore is more than acknowledging, as many have previously, that genres change over time; it is to recognise that NWOAHM marks an identifiable period during which 'metalcore' became widely understood to refer to a particular genre with a relatively specific set of stylistic traits. NWOAHM codification demarcated metalcore as a genre unto itself, distinguishing it from closely related subgenres like metallic hardcore. Rather than simply a term referring to a conscious mixture of metal and hardcore, metalcore came to connote explicit stylistic attributes based upon those displayed prominently in the work of NWOAHM bands. Crucially, even

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[254] http://www.mapofmetal.com/ (accessed 5/9/2017).

[255] See, for example, Smialek (2015, pp. 100-101), and non-academic texts by Rowe (2014), Sergeant D (2014b), and Andrew (2015).

after the NWOAHM period ended, metalcore still commonly refers to elements of style introduced during this codification, notably the combination of clean and distorted vocals, high-fidelity, polished production, and a clear influence from melodic death metal. In this way, the codification of metalcore amounted to a narrowing of the genre's scope, moving from broad notions of metal/hardcore cross-pollination to comparatively precise instantiations of metal/hardcore symbiosis.

The process of codification enacted during the NWOAHM period was not the sole preserve of artists, but instead marks a confluence of various interrelated factors. Despite metalcore existing in some form or another for around a decade prior to NWOAHM, it was only during the first few years of the twenty-first century that the genre became codified. Histories of NWOAHM and metalcore tend to emphasise the waning popularity of nu metal, the increase of (major) record label support of NWOAHM artists, television exposure through MTV2's *Headbanger's Ball*, and the ever-expanding possibilities of internet marketing as combining to position metalcore as the most prominent, new mainstream metal/hardcore genre during the first half-decade of the twenty-first century.

This section clarifies the logic of generic codification, highlighting how a flexible model of codification accounts for both synchronic stability and diachronic adaptability. I outline how, on the one hand, codified metalcore may appear as a discrete genre, but on the other hand, how the processes of codification afford the grouping of multiple varieties of metalcore within a single genre. Sam Dunn's *Lock Horns* (Banger 2015a) offers a case study of codification in action, demonstrating not only that metalcore is conceptualised differently post-codification, but that since the NWOAHM period metalcore has become stabilised around a few key compositional and performance-related traits (whereas pre-codification metalcore was relatively undefined).

Clarifying Codification

My use of codification recognises the *perception* that genres (and, to a greater extent, subgenres) may be interpreted as connoting specific elements of style,

but does not go so far as to suggest that something as complex as a musical genre can be literally reduced to a few specific laws. Following Ronald Byrnside (1975),[256] Weinstein refers to a 'period of crystallization, [during which a] style is self-consciously acknowledged. Its audience recognizes it as a distinctive style' (2000, p. 7). Weinstein argues that '[t]he core of heavy metal—its sonic, visual, and verbal code—is defined in terms of the genre's period of crystallization in the mid-to late 1970s' (2000, p. 8), a model adapted by Cope when he declares that 'the 1980s saw a crystallising of the heavy metal genre based on a specific homology of musical and aesthetic terms' (2010, p. 120). While they disagree on dates for the period of crystallisation, both Weinstein and Cope identify a phase during which the heavy metal genre came to be identifiable as a result of the specific collocation and prominence of certain elements of style.

Having identified a period of crystallisation, 'one can look back to the formative phase, identifying precursors and initiators, and also look forward to the phase of fragmentation (not yet decay), in which subgenres erupted' (Weinstein 2000, p. 8). The process of crystallisation may therefore be understood as previously unconnected (or tangentially connected) elements joining (or being joined) together to form a new entity that did not exist previously. Since the product of such crystallisation (a genre) is new, artists and artefacts may be retrospectively repositioned as 'precursors and initiators', or 'pioneers' (Phillipov 2012, p. 75), linked to the new genre without being part of that genre. It is in this vein that artists/artefacts are ascribed the status of 'proto' to any given genre. Such designations are necessarily retrospective, as it is only in the wake of later death metal albums that Possessed's *Seven Churches* (1985) can be described as 'the first proto-death metal album' (Albert Mudrian in Wiederhorn & Turman, 2013, p. 461).[257] Mudrian comes to this conclusion when comparing *Seven Churches* to Obituary's *Slowly We Rot* (1989), a perspective and methodology shared by Phillipov (2012, p. 75). Possessed can

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[256] 'As Ronald Byrnside [1975] notes, musical styles "generally follow a pattern of formation, crystallization, and decay"' (Weinstein 2000, p. 7).
[257] The first chapter of Wiederhorn and Turman (2013), 'Kick Out the Jams: Proto-Metal, 1964-1970' (pp. 7-27), relies upon this logic.

only be *proto*-death metal once 'death metal' has been crystallised at a later date. In this way, Possessed have been retrospectively repositioned as directly related to, while remaining distinct from, death metal; *Seven Churches* becoming 'the last non-death metal [album] because it's about as close as you can be without being all the way in' (Mudrian in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 461).

A restrictive model of crystallisation necessarily engenders the development of proto genres and subgenres since, while artists may add new or different styles to those crystallised, or focus especially on one or two specific crystallised styles, certain elements of a crystallised genre remain intact. It is this logic that underpins Cope's (2010) core and periphery model (discussed in chapter four), essentially arguing that heavy metal crystallised around a core set of stylistic codes initiated primarily by Black Sabbath. The presence of peripheral codes allows for heavy metal to evolve and create various subgenres, thereby avoiding the third phase of Byrnside's model: decay. Despite this apparent capacity for change, the existence of subgenres (like proto genres) becomes inevitable within crystallised genres since any deviation from the crystallised form will be deemed something other than that form. In this way, crystallised heavy metal is bound to a continual process of new subgenre creation, each with links to the original genre more convoluted than the last.

> The [underground Tokyo hardcore] scene was performed into existence by individuals—musicians, mixers, stagehands, managers, and audience members—through the production of codified music and extramusical tropes (Matsue 2009, p. 42).

The inherent flexibility of *codification* may be best understood when one acknowledges that the elements (stylistic or otherwise) discussed as essential to or principal within certain genres and subgenres are not more or less than tropes. By this, I mean to highlight that when one discusses growling as a stylistic trait of death metal, one is identifying a *trope* of death metal insofar as a growling vocal technique is not necessarily limited to death metal, nor is it inherent within the death metal genre. Rather, growling has become synonymous with death metal – hence, 'death metal growls' (Neilstein 2012b)

– over time, through consistent usage by innumerable artists, reliable acknowledgement from audiences, and continual reinforcement by critics.[258] By recognising growls as a trope of death metal, instead of an essential, fixed stylistic element, we can understand codification as part of fluid genre constructs.

While NWOAHM codified metalcore through the introduction and popularisation of certain stylistic tropes, pre-codification metalcore remains part of the metalcore genre. This flexibility generally leads to a different type of retrospective repositioning wherein older versions of metalcore become understood as specific variants of the genre, as with 'Earth Crisis kinda metalcore (aka metallic hardcore)' (Happy Metal Guy 2014), or 'so-called "noisecore" bands of the 90s' (Sergeant D 2010) including Rorschach and Deadguy, that nevertheless retain their status as part of the metalcore genre. Such logic may also apply to future variations where the new version of the genre is ascribed a specific term: All That Remains' '*The Fall Of Ideals* [2006], just like [Trivium's] *Ascendancy* [2005], is seriously one of the best melodic metalcore records ever' (Rowe 2014).[259] The recognition of metalcore's continual codification allows for each of these variations to remain inextricably part of the metalcore genre. Thus, despite not incorporating clean vocals or an overt melodic death metal influence – tropes codified during NWOAHM – 'Integrity have long been considered the first band to be called metalcore [...and] pioneered an approach that was rife in the underground punk scene as the '90s drew to a close' (Hill 2015a).

This interpretation of codification allows for numerous artists/artefacts to remain part of metalcore even after NWOAHM's codification, affording a notion of genre that is temporally fluid and less reliant upon ostensible causality. Whereas crystallisation might imply that a few specific artists caused (directly or indirectly through influence distinct from the genre in question) a genre to crystallise in a certain way, codification recognises that artists/artefacts will

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[258] See chapter three (pp. 75-76) for a discussion of growls as connoting death metal.
[259] The same logic underpins Matt Crane's designation of 'modern metalcore' (2014c).

have varying levels of influence upon genre participants at different times, in different ways. For this reason, someone writing more than half a decade post-codification can claim that '[a]long with key records by Dillinger Escape Plan and Botch, [Coalesce's] *Give Them Rope* [1997] is an underground milestone that helped pioneer what was soon called "metalcore"' (Gotrich 2011). Although none of these bands (or, at least, the albums mentioned) fit the style tropes of metalcore as codified by NWOAHM, they remain part of the genre. The adaptability of codification becomes more evident when one notes the retrospective repositioning of certain artists and artefacts as particularly influential upon NWOAHM-era metalcore, only after NWOAHM codification had occurred.

Lock Horns*: Codification in Action*

A particularly salient example of the significance of NWOAHM codification may be found in the first episode of ongoing web series, *Lock Horns*, produced by Banger Films, creators of *Metal Evolution: The Series* (2012). Broadcast through YouTube (livestreamed before later being uploaded as a video), the *Lock Horns* series centres upon filmmaker Sam Dunn attempting to update his 'Heavy Metal Family Tree' (HMFT), first constructed for his documentary, *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey* (2005). The premise of the series is born from the acknowledgement that metal/hardcore genres have changed in the ten years since the original HMFT was compiled, and that the first HMFT was incomplete (as all such lists inevitably are). As explored in chapter two,[260] the HMFT consists of numerous lists of artists grouped together under specific genre banners in an arborescent manner. In the first episode of *Lock Horns* (Banger 2015a), Dunn invites Cancer Bats vocalist Liam Cormier to debate the accuracy and relevance of the metalcore artist list as it appeared in the original HMFT. Alongside input from viewers and commenters on social media (some commenting on the live stream, others offering suggestions prior to the broadcast), Dunn and Cormier discuss the merits of specific artists in relation to the metalcore genre, eventually constructing a newly updated metalcore list (see Table 3, below).

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[260] See pp. 45-46.

The choice of metalcore as the subject of the first episode is significant, since metalcore is 'a genre that many of you know has caused a lot of controversy and a lot of discussion over the years' (Banger 2015b, 0:43-0:49). Such attention is likely due to the persistent popularity of metalcore during the first decade of the twenty-first century, a characteristic of the NWOAHM codification that, as this episode substantiates, altered common notions of metalcore. The timing of the original HMFT is also crucial. Since Dunn 'wanted [the family tree] to be a document of bands that we felt had actually made an impact in metal' (Banger 2015a, 2:50-2:55), he was limited to choosing artists who had been active for a certain period of time, such that their impact could be measured to some degree. The newest band on the original HMFT metalcore list, Hatebreed, were formed in 1994 and released their debut album, *Satisfaction is the Death of Desire*, in 1997. By contrast, two artists on the 2015 list – Bullet for My Valentine and Parkway Drive – released their debut albums in the same year the original list was constructed.[261] The kind of distance required to identify 'bands that we feel unequivocally have made an impact' (Dunn in Banger 2015a, 3:01-3:05) automatically disqualified several artists that appear on the later list from consideration for the first.

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[261] Bullet for My Valentine, *The Poison* (2005); Parkway Drive, *Killing with a Smile* (2005).

Heavy Metal Family Tree metalcore list (from *Metal: A Headbanger's Journey*, 2005)	Metalcore list from *Lock Horns* (2015a)
Corrosion of Conformity	Hatebreed
Dirty Rotten Imbeciles	Converge
Suicidal Tendencies	Killswitch Engage
Stormtroopers of Death	As I Lay Dying
Cro-Mags	Unearth
Biohazard	Biohazard
Machine Head	Darkest Hour
Earth Crisis	Earth Crisis
Hatebreed	Poison the Well
	Avenged Sevenfold
	Atreyu
	Bullet for My Valentine
	Parkway Drive

Table 3: Comparison of metalcore genre lists from Dunn (2005) and Banger (2015a).[262]

Table 3 displays the metalcore lists as presented in the original HMFT from 2005 and the newly constructed list at the culmination of the *Lock Horns* episode in 2015. Comparing the lists, the most obvious differences are the number of artists in each, and how few artists are included in both. That more bands comprise the latter list may be evidence of the increase in popularity of

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[262] As explained by Dunn in Banger (2015a), each list is structured somewhat differently. Bands on the earlier list (Dunn 2005) are ordered chronologically from the date of their first release, while the first few bands on the later list (Banger 2015a) are ordered by supposed significance to the genre (Hatebreed, Converge, Killswitch Engage), but without any clear premeditation thereafter.

metalcore during the decade between the construction of the two lists, with a larger corpus of artists now deemed representative of the genre. More pertinent, only three artists (Hatebreed, Earth Crisis, and Biohazard) appear in both lists, suggesting that metalcore is understood differently in 2015 than it was in 2005. To investigate the make-up of these lists, it is worth considering what happened to the artists included in the first but not the second, and exploring from where the new artists came.

Part of the reason for so many entries changing from one list to the other is movement between non-metalcore genre lists, including new additions to the HMFT. The first such movement occurs as a result of Cormier disagreeing with Dunn's original classification of some artists as metalcore. To wit, Cormier suggests moving Corrosion of Conformity, Dirty Rotten Imbeciles, Suicidal Tendencies, Stormtroopers of Death, and, after some deliberation, Cro-Mags to the newly created 'crossover' list, in order to situate them more accurately. While these bands were previously perceived as metalcore, more recently (as outlined in chapters two and three), they have been positioned as central to crossover during the mid-to-late 1980s.[263] With only three bands remaining on the metalcore list, Cormier observes that multiple bands from Dunn's 'New Wave of American Metal' list (from the 2005 HMFT) would now be considered metalcore. From the NWOAM list, Dunn and Cormier move Killswitch Engage, As I Lay Dying, Unearth, and Darkest Hour over to metalcore, while Trivium are put to one side (with Machine Head) as the hosts are unsure about the appropriate generic affiliation for the band.[264] Alongside these movements between lists, Cormier introduces new artists to the HMFT, including Converge and Poison the Well, while suggestions from social media commenters result in the additions of Avenged Sevenfold, Atreyu, Bullet for My Valentine, and Parkway Drive.

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[263] Machine Head are also removed from the metalcore list, though neither Dunn nor Cormier are sure where to position the band, primarily owing to stylistic changes over the course of their career, and so place them outside the metalcore and crossover lists.
[264] The remaining artists in the NWOAM list are Shadows Fall, Lamb of God, God Forbid, Chimaira, and The Black Dahlia Murder.

That these other genres came into the discussion is indicative of the changes in what is said to define metalcore – its tropes – from one decade to the next. Cormier provides a definition for metalcore based upon what he was taught by older hardcore fans when he was growing up: 'it's metal hardcore. So, in the same way that there's punk hardcore, like the, y'know, Bad Brains, Youth of Today, Gorilla Biscuits, that side of things, there's also metal hardcore where they're taking from, y'know, older metal bands' (Banger 2015a, 3:43-3:56). More directly, metalcore can be described as 'two minute songs, no solos, just all the heavy meat and potatoes of metal in this hardcore' (Cormier in Banger 2015a, 4:24-4:29). By this definition, the 2005 list may be generally accurate, but, responding to Cormier's description, Dunn notes that the 'beauty and the beast, good cop/bad cop' incorporation of clean and distorted vocals 'seems to be, kind of, one of the trademarks of metalcore now' (Banger 2015a, 4:36-4:48). Here, one finds an explicit example of the NWOAHM codification of metalcore. Pre-codification, when Cormier was taught the meaning of metalcore and when Dunn constructed his HMFT, key stylistic markers of metalcore could be boiled down to short songs, the exclusion of guitar solos, and quotidian lyrical themes, with the implication that 'metalcore' referred to hardcore musicians utilising metal influences. However, post-codification, the most significant metalcore tropes appear to be a mixture of clean and distorted vocals, and a perception that the combination of metal and hardcore is more heavily weighted toward metal. It is no coincidence that most of the 2005 list are reassigned to crossover, while several of the 2015 list were previously deemed part of NWOAM.

Recognising the power of NWOAHM codification, Dunn recalls that when he was first constructing the family tree around 2005, bands on the New Wave of American Metal list represented 'what was exploding', however, ten years later, 'people don't use this word [NWOAHM] anymore',[265] instead preferring metalcore 'as a descriptor' (Banger 2015a, 22:24-22:37). NWOAHM codified metalcore to such an extent that a distinction between the two can no longer

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[265] To avoid possible accusations of editorialising on my part, note that Dunn points to the New Wave of American Metal list while observing that 'people don't use this word anymore' (Banger 2015a, 22:27-22:29).

be made, as particular elements became integrated into metalcore the newer term (NWOAHM) lost much of its meaning.

Codifying Style

> Judging by their music, [NWOAHM bands] liked thrash beats, Swedish melodies, breakdowns, touchy-feely lyrics, and especially, screaming verses juxtaposed with clean-sung choruses (Schafer 2016).

As the episode of *Lock Horns* makes clear, the codification of metalcore through NWOAHM may be best understood as the reification of certain elements of style and the simultaneous diminution of others. Berelian citing The Dillinger Escape Plan's use of 'nonstandard song structure' (2005, p. 223) is echoed by Today Is the Day vocalist/guitarist Steve Austin's admission that 'Whenever I see guys playing odd-time-signature-, heavy-type noise, I feel a sense of pride of being an old cat' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 558). But whereas Wiederhorn and Turman include Austin's words as a precursor to proper metalcore as established during NWOAHM,[266] Berelian references The Dillinger Escape Plan as a metalcore band in the present tense. Style elements shared by these two bands (nonstandard song structure, irregular time signatures, frequent use of dissonance, and sardonic clean vocals reminiscent of grunge) are interpreted by Berelian as indicative of metalcore, but writing post-codification Wiederhorn and Turman read such properties as closer to antecedent of metalcore. Indeed, Hill's list of artists emblematic of metalcore '[a]s the new millennium dawned' (Hill 2015a) includes Converge, The Hope Conspiracy, American Nightmare,[267] Botch, The Dillinger Escape Plan, Poison the Well, and Darkest Hour, but only the latter two bands appear regularly in discussions of post-codification metalcore. By contrast, Rees (2014) cites Shadows Fall, Killswitch Engage, Unearth, All That Remains, God Forbid, Chimaira, and Lamb of God as representative of NWOAHM, though such a list could also refer to metalcore post-codification. Ostensibly, one might suggest that NWOAHM codification

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[266] The release of Today Is the Day's debut album, *Supernova* (1992), coincides with the beginning of Wiederhorn and Turman's metalcore lifespan.

[267] American Nightmare later changed their name to Give Up the Ghost ahead of releasing second album, *We're Down Til We're Underground* (2003).

merely shifted the parameters of metalcore such that one group of exemplary artists have been replaced by another, but the process of codification is more particular.

Hatebreed vocalist Jamey Jasta recalls that in his former band, Jasta 14, 'everyone was so talented and had so many great ideas, but when you're trying to make a simple recipe it just doesn't work' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 624). Jasta decided to take a different approach with Hatebreed: '[l]et's make this meat and potatoes. Let's try and be like the AC/DC of metallic hardcore and write songs that any kid can pick up and learn' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 624). This decision proved influential for later artists,[268] among them Killswitch Engage. Recalling the two bands whose members went on to form Killswitch Engage,[269] bassist Mike D'Antonio contends that 'Overcast and Aftershock had gone in such crazy directions, we were throwing a million genres into one song' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 586), but after observing Hatebreed's model, D'Antonio decided to do something different for his new project. Hatebreed 'had this simplistic style and they sold a million records on Victory [Records]', so Killswitch Engage 'started from scratch and stripped everything down, and added these guitar harmonies inspired by Swedish melodic death metal' (p. 586). Thus, when '[i]n 2002 Killswitch Engage released *Alive Or Just Breathing* and blew metalcore wide open' (Hill 2015a), a new, more specific set of compositional and performance-related elements of style came to be connoted by the term 'metalcore'. Arguably the most significant (or, at least, the most commented upon) style tropes to come to the fore during codification were breakdowns, (Swedish) melodic death metal riffs, and the use of both distorted and clean vocals. While breakdowns were already prevalent in much hardcore during the 1990s, as well as in pre-codification metalcore,[270]

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[268] Hatebreed's debut album '*Satisfaction Is the Death of Desire* [1997] is the greatest hardcore album ever. So many bands use that as the blueprint for what they're going to sound like, even today' (Emmure vocalist Frankie Palmeri in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 645).

[269] Overcast bassist Mike D'Antonio would later form Killswitch Engage in 1999 with Aftershock drummer/guitarist Adam Dutkiewicz and guitarist Joel Stroetzel (Overcast guitarist Pete Cortese was also a member of Killswitch Engage 2000-2001, as was Aftershock drummer Tom Gomes 2002-2003). Former Aftershock guitarist Jonathan Donais formed Shadows Fall in 1995, later to be joined by former Overcast vocalist Brian Fair.

[270] See pp. 88-94 for discussion of breakdowns.

the overt influence of melodic death metal and the incorporation of clean vocals have been widely interpreted as defining characteristics of NWOAHM and, subsequently, metalcore.

Melodic Death Metal

Although influences upon NWOAHM artists include NWOBHM, thrash, black metal, and progressive metal (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 561; Rees 2014), certain artists and scenes appear more frequently than others in accounts of metalcore history. Pantera are commonly listed as a significant inspiration for NWOAHM-era metalcore bands (Rosenberg 2010a; Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 307), but the most habitually cited influential artists are At the Gates, Dark Tranquillity, and In Flames. Known collectively as exemplifying 'the Gothenburg sound' (Berelian 2005; Ekeroth 2008), these Swedish bands are often joined by the British band Carcass (specifically *Heartwork*, 1993) as some of the most well-known purveyors of melodic death metal. Contrasted with death metal emanating from Stockholm,[271] Gothenburg death metal included '[m]ore melodies and traditional verse/chorus structures', '[a] clearer sound and less brutality. […] The guitars aren't as crushing, and the drum work is usually more sterile', while '[t]he vocals are screamed rather than grunted' (Ekeroth 2008, p. 267). Much like the Stockholm scene that centred around Studio Sunlight, Gothenburg's Studio Fredman became a significant institution for Swedish melodic death metal, hosting each of the Gothenburg sound's 'founding three' (Crane 2014b) – At the Gates, Dark Tranquillity, and In Flames.[272]

At the Gates 'redefined death metal with atmospheric harmonies and complex guitar work' (Ekeroth 2008, p. 267), Dark Tranquillity 'were incorporating New Wave of British Heavy Metal like [Judas] Priest and Saxon into death metal' (former vocalist Anders Fridén in Ekeroth 2008, p. 267), and, slightly later, In

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[271] See pp. 79-80 for discussion of the Stockholm sound.

[272] Studio Fredman was used by later Swedish melodic death metal bands like Arch Enemy, The Haunted, and Soilwork. More recently, the studio has played host to popular metalcore bands like I Killed the Prom Queen (*Music for the Recently Deceased*, 2006), Bring Me the Horizon (*Suicide Season*, 2008), and Architects (*Lost Forever // Lost Together*, 2014).

Flames 'just tried to make use of the influences we were listening to – death metal, NWOBHM and the German thrash stuff' (Fridén in Alderslade 2014).[273] These bands released the three most frequently cited examples of Swedish melodic death metal – At the Gates' *Slaughter of the Soul* (1995), Dark Tranquillity's *The Gallery* (1995), and In Flames' *The Jester Race* (1996) – although 'the term "Gothenburg sound" wasn't really established until the late 90's [*sic*] when the sound started to spread' (At the Gates/The Haunted guitarist Anders Björler in Ekeroth 2008, p. 269).

While touring the US with The Haunted during the late 1990s, Björler 'noticed that hardcore bands in the U.S. would mix the Gothenburg style with New York hardcore' (in J. Bennett 2009a, p. 242), the latter component being crucial to the identification of a new variant of metalcore. In Flames guitarist Björn Gelotte recalls that Killswitch Engage and Shadows Fall were 'the first two bands [in the US] adapting the melodies and the death metal, plus the hardcore part of it that makes it American, say, or metalcore or whatever you call it' (Killswitch Engage 2005; 7:46-7:58). Indeed, Shadows Fall vocalist Brian Fair suggests that At the Gates' '*Slaughter of the Soul* was probably, like, what changed a lot of, I wanna say, the Boston metal/hardcore scene' (in Banger 2016; 15:15-15:19). Despite the supposed novelty of mixing American hardcore with Swedish (melodic) death metal, At the Gates vocalist Tomas Lindberg recalls that '[e]veryone in the band was into hardcore to one degree or another. […] it's rewarding that it came across that we actually had a hardcore influence in the band' (in J. Bennett 2009a, p. 243). Nevertheless, most metalcore historians pinpoint the influence of melodic death metal as paramount to the identification of NWOAHM and, by extension, NWOAHM-codified metalcore. Multiple authors highlight the incorporation of melodic death metal (usually the Gothenburg sound) within metalcore as transforming the genre into something

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[273] Anders Fridén was the original vocalist for Dark Tranquillity, appearing on their first three releases including debut album *Skydancer* (1993), before joining In Flames ahead of their second album, *The Jester Race* (1996). Fridén's replacement in Dark Tranquillity, Mikael Stanne (who first appeared on the band's second album, *The Gallery*, 1995), was the original vocalist for In Flames, performing on their debut, *Lunar Strain* (1994).

it previously was not,[274] thus casting melodic death metal as an essential element of NWOAHM codification.

While Ekeroth perceives a 'ravaging of the Gothenburg melodic death metal sound [that] has more recently reached a crisis point in the mid-2000s metalcore scene' (2008, p. 268), and Lee and Voegtlin suggest that '[f]rom the riffs to the solos to the harmonies, American metalcore has basically taken [At the Gates' *Slaughter of the Soul*] and copied it a thousand times over' (2006), these accounts are not entirely typical. Rather than consider metalcore as appropriating melodic death metal, most commentators cast NWOAHM as an original incorporation of certain melodic death metal tropes into already-established norms of metalcore. Metalcore 'was edgy, new and interesting' because albums 'like [Unearth's] *The Stings of Conscience* [2001] introduced an In Flames-esque technicality and melodiousness to the raw energy that hardcore had a monopoly on' (Angry Metal Guy 2009). On *Alive or Just Breathing* (2002), Killswitch Engage 'took the innovative approach and began adding dashes of the melodic Gothenburg sound' (Berelian 2005, p. 178), mixing elements of melodic death metal 'with soaring melodic choruses, [whereupon] almost every other band in the scene followed suit' (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 563).

Indeed, compositional devices prevalent in the work of NWOAHM (and subsequently, metalcore) artists exhibit clear influence from melodic death metal. The use of a 'pedal point riff' (Mynett 2013, p. 143) during the verses of Killswitch Engage's 'Rose of Sharyn' (*The End of Heartache*, 2004; 0:21-0:37) is reminiscent of such riffs in At the Gates' 'Blinded by Fear' (*Slaughter of the Soul*, 1995; 0:39-0:55) and In Flames' 'Graveland' (*The Jester Race*, 1996; 0:13-0:20).[275] Minor scale tremolo riff sections like those in Unearth's 'Endless'

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[274] See, for instance, Berelian (2005, p. 139, p. 159), Lee and Voegtlin (2006), Ekeroth (2008, p. 268), J. Bennett (2009a, p. 238), Wiederhorn and Turman (2013, p. 488), Alderslade (2014), Crane (2014b), and Smialek (2015, p. 196), among others.

[275] A pedal point riff outlines a melody in fragments by alternating between a bass note pedal (often palm-muted on the lower strings of a guitar) and notes in a higher register that combine to form a melody. The pedal note may change to imply harmonic movement, or remain static and foreground the melody. Further examples can be found during the verse in As I Lay Dying's

(*The Oncoming Storm*, 2004; 0:00-0:09) and Shadows Fall's 'The Light That Blinds' (*The War Within*, 2004; 0:44-1:05) are similarly evocative of such passages in In Flames' 'December Flower' (*The Jester Race*, 1996; 0:01-0:15). The notion that melodic death metal inspired NWOAHM-codified metalcore is widespread. When discussing Carcass's *Heartwork* (1993), Smialek points to 'stylistic innovations' noting that 'future genres were derived from them (e.g. screamo, NWOAHM)' (2015, p. 196), while Matt Crane refers to melodic death metal as metalcore's 'founding ancestor' (2014b).[276] Insomuch as melodic death metal 'added a dash of NWOBHM gung ho and catchy, chorus-centred song structures to death metal's pummelling brutality to bridge the divide between "mainstream" metal and its more extreme cousin like never before' (Alderslade 2014), the subgenre's influence was fundamental to the development of NWOAHM and the subsequent codification of metalcore.

Clean and Distorted Vocals

> We are brutal music with sissy choruses (ex-Killswitch Engage vocalist Howard Jones in Parks 2006b, p. 63).

Perhaps the biggest signifier used to demarcate metalcore is the juxtaposition of clean and distorted vocals, the former regularly occurring during chord-driven chorus sections while the latter coincides with comparatively heavier verse and breakdown riffs. Jones' comment is overly reductionist and tongue-in-cheek, but it nevertheless summarises a perception of metalcore as reducible to a specific formula that centres upon a mixture of clean and distorted vocals. That clean/distorted vocals have become so indicative of metalcore is further evidence of the power of NWOAHM codification, since clean/distorted vocals only became commonplace during the NWOAHM period. Two of Sergeant D's 'big four' of metalcore (2014b) – Poison the Well and Eighteen Visions – are noted as popularising a mixture of clean and distorted vocals,[277] while all five

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'The Darkest Nights' (*Shadows are Security*, 2005; 0:27-0:49) and the verse in Trivium's 'Like Light to the Flies' (*Ascendancy*, 2005; 0:02-0:20).

[276] Crane's list of '12 melodic death-metal songs any self-respecting metalcore fan should like' (2014b) includes tracks by At the Gates, In Flames (both with two entries), and Dark Tranquillity, alongside Carcass, Nightrage, Children of Bodom, Anterior, Soilwork, Slowmotion Apocalypse, and Heaven Shall Burn.

[277] Poison the Well's 'main contribution [to metalcore] was (along with 18V) popularizing good cop/bad cop vocals and the "interchangeable chug riffs with minor leads on top" style that has

of Neilstein's 'top 5 OG metalcore albums of the early 00s' (2015a) include both types of vocal delivery.[278] Post-codification, 'the presence of a screamed verse juxtaposed with a sharply contrasting sung chorus can be such a strong stylistic marker that it can result in a band taking on a metalcore label even when nearly all other aspects of their music are stylistically indistinguishable from extreme metal' (Smialek 2015, p. 101). It is arguably for this reason that a band like Trivium, 'who have not a single atom of influence, approach or sound of punk in their make up' (Hill 2015a), were positioned as metalcore during the NWOAHM period, as several songs on *Ascendancy* (2005) follow the distorted verse/clean chorus model. Conversely, despite other stylistic markers of metalcore, a lack of clean vocals on The Acacia Strain's *…And Life is Very Long* (2002) and *3750* (2004) seemingly precluded them from consideration as metalcore.

Clean/distorted vocals became a defining factor of NWOAHM codification at least in part because of their appearance on major label releases, especially as singles. Although clean vocals appear on debut releases by several NWOAHM bands, they are typically less prominent and less restricted to chorus sections than on later albums. Consequently, many metal/hardcore participants' first exposure to metalcore came in the form of glossy music videos for songs that adhered relatively strictly to a distorted verse/clean chorus form. Only three tracks from As I Lay Dying's *Shadows Are Security* (2005) feature clean vocals – 'Confined', 'The Darkest Nights', 'Through Struggle' – but all three were released as singles, for which music videos were produced, and the clean vocals are utilised only during choruses. Similarly, All That Remains' first album to chart in the Billboard 200,[279] *The Fall of Ideals* (2006), includes clean vocals on all but two songs, whereas fewer than half of the songs on *This Darkened Heart* (2004) employ the vocal style.

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come to define metalcore these days'; 'although [Eighteen Visions] probably weren't the FIRST to do a mix of singing and screaming, they definitely popularized it' (Sergeant D 2014b).

[278] Albums in order of appearance on Neilstein's (2015a) list: Killswitch Engage's *The End of Heartache* (2004), Shadows Fall's *The War Within* (2004), Cave In's *Until Your Heart Stops* (1998), Eighteen Visions' *Vanity* (2002), and Avenged Sevenfold's *Waking the Fallen* (2003).

[279] http://www.billboard.com/artist/278657/all-remains/chart?f=305 (accessed 5/9/2017).

Unearth guitarist Ken Susi suggests that '[b]ecause of Killswitch [Engage's] success, everyone on this fucking planet does that scream/sing thing and every single label is looking for the next Killswitch' (in Parks 2006b, p. 62), and there was indeed a general trend among prominent NWOAHM bands to increase the amount of clean vocals in their music from one album to the next (notable exceptions include Unearth and Darkest Hour). However, the drive to mix clean and distorted vocals appears to pre-date any commercial success enjoyed by some NWOAHM artists. Guitarist Matt Bachand recalls that 'the main reason we started looking for another singer' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 571) after the release of Shadows Fall's *Somber Eyes to the Sky* (1997) was then-vocalist Phil Labonte's reluctance to perform clean vocals. Atreyu drummer/vocalist Brandon Saller notes that as the band 'evolved, I realized that I could actually *sing* […] There weren't a lot of bands doing that screaming and singing mix; I'm not saying we pioneered it, but we took our own approach to it' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 596; original emphasis), casting the clean vocals that first appeared on second EP, *Fractures in the Facade of Your Porcelain Beauty* (2001), as an attempt at originality rather than in the pursuit of commercial gain.

Despite the strong association between clean/distorted vocals and NWOAHM-codified metalcore, this mixture of vocal styles appears in earlier metal/hardcore. After mixing growls reminiscent of death metal with clean vocals on debut album, *Soul of a New Machine* (1992), Fear Factory vocalist Burton C. Bell 'is credited with inventing the scream/sing vocal style that countless bands use now; the entire genre of metalcore would not exist without this album' (Lee and Voegtlin 2006). Bell and guitarist Dino Cazares both recall Fear Factory being recognised as creating the clean/distorted mix that became central to NWOAHM codification: 'I've heard a lot of people say Burt ripped off [Killswitch Engage vocalist] Howard Jones's style. I'm like, "Uh, well, that was Burt's thing. He was doing that *before* Howard"' (Cazares in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 397; original emphasis). While it may be the case that *Soul of a New Machine* was one of the earliest metal albums to mix clean and distorted vocals in this way (distorted verse, clean chorus), members of prominent NWOAHM-era metalcore bands specify influence from (metallic) hardcore

bands of the 1990s. Prior to joining Shadows Fall, vocalist Brian Fair formed Overcast alongside later Killswitch Engage bassist Mike D'Antonio. In contrast to claims regarding Fear Factory, Fair notes that '[w]hen Overcast started [in Boston] in 1990, we were stealing ideas from Integrity and Starkweather. They were some of the first bands I heard who had amazing melodic singing *and* brutal screaming, and I loved Coalesce and Converge' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 559; original emphasis). Starkweather's *Crossbearer* (1992) offers one of the first examples of clean/distorted vocals in a metalcore setting, but later instances include Overcast's *Expectational Dilution* (1994) and Vision of Disorder's *Vision of Disorder* (1996).

Here we encounter a consequence of codification: the construction of a retrospective lineage in which the significance of hardcore is diminished or even excluded from the historiography and reception of NWOAHM-codified metalcore. The misattribution of influence – asserting that Fear Factory inspired one of metalcore's signature compositional/performance-related devices – occurs as a direct result of codification, since it is only after distorted verse/clean chorus form had been established as a stylistic trait of metalcore during codification that connections to (artists like) Fear Factory could be made. Though not necessarily enough to produce a new genre outright, stylistic influence from melodic death metal alongside an increasingly standardised combination of vocal delivery and form had a significant effect upon metalcore during the earliest years of the twenty-first century. The genre came to be identifiable primarily through these stylistic markers (when used in conjunction with extant elements of metalcore style) in such a way that, for many, it could be reduced to them. However, a supposed homogenisation of metalcore was not the only outcome of NWOAHM codification.

Consequences of Codification

The process of NWOAHM codification introduced to metalcore new influences and reified specific compositional/performance-related elements, some of which were already evident in the genre. Aside from these stylistic adaptations, codification produced various other consequences for metalcore specifically,

and metal/hardcore more generally. Codification resulted in changes to metal/hardcore historiography, attenuating the influence of hardcore while emphasising the genre's metal credentials, including the retrospective repositioning of artists and artefacts. Post-codification, various narratives have emerged regarding metalcore's place within metal/hardcore, the genre's relationship to the mainstream, and the wider impact of codification upon contemporary metal/hardcore. This section explores the diverse consequences of NWOAHM codification that became apparent both during and after the NWOAHM period. The interconnected nature of metal/hardcore music culture ensures that the effects of codification are not limited to its primary subjects (NWOAHM and metalcore); the ripples of any codification are far-reaching, leaving an impression upon multiple genres, subgenres, and scenes. The section ends by considering the state of metalcore post-codification, questioning the validity of competing narratives concerning metal/hardcore in the twenty-first century.

The Diminishing Influence of Hardcore

While breakdowns were already prevalent in much hardcore during the 1990s, as well as in pre-codification metalcore, the overt influence of melodic death metal and the incorporation of clean vocals were interpreted by many as being drawn from metal, not hardcore. These metal influences came to dominate metalcore during the period of NWOAHM codification to such an extent that 'metalcore' became understood as a metal genre, rather than as a hardcore genre. In effect, the influence of hardcore upon metalcore had been reduced to that of inspiration, the initial spark that metal nurtured into a bright flame. As outlined in chapter two (and reiterated throughout the thesis), conflict between metal and hardcore has long been purely nominal, hence claims that metalcore is a hardcore genre or a metal genre are equally factitious. Nonetheless, claims regarding the (generic) position of metalcore pre- and post-codification are indicative of one of the consequences of NWOAHM codification: the (supposedly) diminishing influence of hardcore.

For those writing on hardcore, it seems clear from where metalcore developed, citing those hardcore bands who [b]eginning in the late 1980s […] delved into a heavier sound' (Heanfler 2006, p. 16). Haenfler is joined by Kuhn (2010, p. 16), Abraham (2015, p. 466), Andrew (2015), and Rios (2015, p. 80) in considering metalcore a direct descendent or even subgenre of hardcore. During the 1990s, '[h]ardcore in general increasingly adopted a brutal, metal-influenced sound as bands such as Converge, Integrity, Cave In, Vision of Disorder, Hatebreed, Candiria, and Disembodied rose to prominence' (Haenfler 2006, p. 88). Andrew suggests that whereas crossover may be boiled down to metal bands playing with punk and hardcore styles, metalcore can be understood as the inverse, 'hardcore bands playing in a way that showed how much they loved metal, giving the genre a new lease on life' (2015). He notes that 'hardcore had evolved into a heavier, more punishing sound' by the early 1990s, listing a succession of bands that shaped 'the sound we now associate with Madball and Hatebreed: fast, power chord-driven verses, anthemic choruses and punishing breakdowns'.[280] Andrew connects this version of hardcore to NWOAHM via his list of 'influential records' that inspired post-codification metalcore (see above, p. 227). For each of these authors, an understanding of metalcore as part of hardcore somewhat precluded the new genre from significant mainstream exposure while simultaneously keeping the influence of metal from overwhelming the genre's hardcore roots. Combined, these factors allowed metalcore to gestate in an underground that, in retrospect, appears relatively open to stylistic variation and experimentation.[281] Thus, while 'the years from 1997-2003 look like a great dark age for extreme music […] this ignores the crucial developments taking place in the hardcore scene' (Andrew 2015).

Given their hardcore lineage, it was 'fitting […] that Killswitch Engage and Unearth played at This is Hardcore 2014. After a decade of changing the world

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[280] Andrew cites '[b]ands like Gorilla Biscuits, Judge, Side by Side and Chain of Strength [who] led to Integrity, Earth Crisis and Snapcase' (2015).

[281] This stylistic diversity is particularly apparent when observing that in addition to the albums specified above (p. 227), Andrew also lists two records that have been subsequently re-positioned as mathcore in the wake of NWOAHM-codification, Botch's *We Are the Romans* (1999), and The Dillinger Escape Plan's *Calculating Infinity* (1999).

of metal for the better, the movement had come home' (Andrew 2015). Killswitch Engage headlined the first night of This is Hardcore festival 2014, on a bill that included performances from Unearth and Overcast. Between songs, vocalist Jesse Leach notes the band's initial unease upon first being offered the gig, implying that a band like Killswitch Engage may not be suitable for an explicitly hardcore festival. Performing without rhythm guitarist Joel Stroetzel (due to family emergency), Leach tells the audience that the band 'decided to play a lot of the old stuff, I figured you guys at This is Hardcore could probably appreciate that a little more' (hate5six 2014). Killswitch Engage play three songs from the then-most-recent album, *Disarm the Descent* (2013), six from the second album, *Alive or Just Breathing* (2002), two from the debut album, *Killswitch Engage* (2000), and two that appear on both their first and second albums.[282] In focusing on older material, the band perform songs that are generally simpler, closer to stereotypical metallic hardcore, less reliant on two guitars (rhythm and lead), and which include fewer clean vocals than songs from later in the band's career.

There is a notable omission of any songs from the ten-year period in which Howard Jones served as lead vocalist for the band, despite or perhaps because it was during this period that Killswitch Engage enjoyed their greatest commercial success. This concession to an audience presumably comprising mostly hardcore fans is interesting in part because it might not have been necessary,[283] but mainly because it confirms that while metalcore may have started as directly linked to hardcore, NWOAHM-codification has repositioned metalcore as a metal genre. Indeed, Leach contends that '[w]e may be a metal band, but hardcore is in our blood', thanking the audience, who 'embraced us knowing we travel the world playing metal'. Whereas metalcore pre-codification was understood by many as a genre directly linked to hardcore, the

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[282] 'Temple from the Within' and 'Vide Infra' were originally released on *Killswitch Engage* (2000) but were re-recorded for *Alive or Just Breathing* (2002) with only minimal changes (primarily in production quality).

[283] Prior to this concert, Killswitch Engage released a statement regarding Stroetzel's absence, informing fans that their upcoming tour would feature Unearth's Ken Susi performing some songs with the band (Blabbermouth 2014). Despite Susi attending This is Hardcore 2014 to perform with Unearth, he does not perform with Killswitch Engage.

incorporation of more overtly metal influences as part of NWOAHM codification resulted in a new perception of metalcore as a metal genre. This, in turn, led to a re-evaluation of the historiography of metalcore, necessitating a repositioning of artists and artefacts as within or without the genre's history.

Retrospective Repositioning

While the very concept of there being a 'first metalcore band' runs counter to an understanding of interconnected, fluid genres, discussions of metalcore's origins are instructive when considering NWOAHM codification. Specifically, the depth of NWOAHM codification can be inferred when one observes the language used when discussing what we might call different generations of metalcore artists. Those bands cited as inventing metalcore by Wiederhorn and Turman's (2013) interviewees – Integrity, Rorschach, Earth Crisis, etc. – may have been some of the first identifiably metalcore bands, but post-codification their status has shifted. Instead of being originators of the genre, many of these earlier artists are now more commonly celebrated for their influence upon NWOAHM-era metalcore. Indeed, when noting the significance of Rorschach, Jesse Leach suggests that 'they were probably the biggest influence for any of the bands in the [1990s New England metalcore] scene' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 559). After submitting that Integrity were '[t]he first true metalcore band', Ryan Downey supports his claim by observing that Integrity 'were very influential to Killswitch Engage and a lot of other bands' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 558). Effectively confirming Downey's assertion, Mike D'Antonio recalls that Overcast 'took on that evil Integrity attitude' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 563), before going on to note the influence of Starkweather and Candiria. Crucially, these bands are discussed as influences upon later (codified) metalcore, as opposed to being metalcore bands in their own right.

Although 'Coalesce managed to define the burgeoning metal/hardcore genre with *Give Them Rope* [1997]' (Simon 2009, p. 53), they were not a metalcore band in the post-codification sense. Instead, 'the band that created the blueprint for metalcore as we know it today were Vision Of Disorder' whose second

album, *Imprint* (1998) 'tore up the rule book, made the riffs more technical, the songs more brutal and the approach more metal' (Hill 2015a). Compared to *Give Them Rope*, *Imprint* may be described as more straightforward, including less dissonance, fewer irregular time signatures, and clearer song structures. Most significantly, perhaps, Vision of Disorder's *Imprint* utilises both clean and distorted vocals (e.g. 'Twelve Steps to Nothing'). It is likely for this reason more than any other that *Imprint* is portrayed as an 'early attempt at what would later be called metalcore' (Simon 2009, p. 124), because clean/distorted vocals became an integral element of codified metalcore. Of course, positioning the album in this way is necessarily a retrospective action: only after metalcore had been codified by NWOAHM could one trace a direct lineage between newly codified stylistic traits. Discussing Carcass' *Heartwork* (1993), Smialek recognises that 'with the benefit of hindsight […] it is possible to refer to the album as a progenitor of "melodic death metal" given the endurance of its stylistic innovations' (2015, p. 196). This is the same type of retrospective repositioning undertaken by Simon and Hill (albeit Smialek alerts his reader to the fact), recasting a specific artist as the source of a later (sub)genre only once that genre has been established.

While all claims of innovation purportedly based on evidence must be retrospective, the power of NWOAHM codification is such that not only did it redefine what metalcore was during the twenty-first century, it also repositioned how participants viewed twentieth-century metalcore. Prior to NWOAHM codification there would be little reason to specify bands like Coalesce or Vision of Disorder as especially influential upon metalcore, much less Carcass or even Fear Factory. Moreover, some of those artists that have become known as influential had a relatively scant audience when releasing apparently seminal material. Andrew reminds us that while one may 'call these bands and records influential now, they were virtually unknown outside the hardcore scene' (2015) at the time of their original release. It is only in the years since NWOAHM/metalcore became commercially successful that many of these pre-codification artists and artefacts have become acknowledged by a wider audience. Several albums by purportedly significant bands have been re-released in the wake of NWOAHM's popularity – Coalesce's *Give Them Rope*

in 2004,[284] Shai Hulud's *Hearts Once Nourished with Hope and Compassion* in 2006, among others – retrospectively solidifying their position in metalcore historiography.

Competing Narratives

The impact of NWOAHM on metalcore has resulted in several contrary narratives that seem to accompany any discussion of the genre since the NWOAHM period ended. Ostensibly pertaining directly to metalcore, these narratives nonetheless tend to consider the supposed effects of NWOAHM-codified metalcore on the rest of metal/hardcore music culture. The four narratives outlined below variously construct metalcore as (1) a replacement for nu metal, (2) as representative of mainstream metal, (3) as an abject genre, and (4) as a gateway to real metal. Though they interpret the genre differently, all four narratives position twenty-first century metalcore as outward-facing, appealing primarily to those external to metal/hardcore. It is metalcore's status as a Hybrid Genre and position on the periphery of metal/hardcore that allows the genre to function variously within and without metal/hardcore broader traditions.

Nu Metal Replacement

The nu metal replacement narrative emerges from a confluence of two distinct but related phenomena: the decline in popularity of nu metal during the first few years of the twenty-first century, and the subsequent rise to the mainstream of NWOAHM in the immediate aftermath. At the core of the nu metal replacement narrative, then, is the desire to connect these events in a causal relationship. It is not simply the case that '[a]s the twenty-first century has progressed, nu metal has begun to exhaust itself artistically' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 1), but rather that nu metal was being *replaced* by the newer, younger, and apparently more exciting NWOAHM. For many metal/hardcore participants, this ousting of nu metal was achieved in both figurative and literal terms. Most obviously, NWOAHM bands began signing with larger labels, first eating into nu metal's

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[284] This remixed and remastered version was released as *Give Them Rope She Said v2.0* (2004).

share of the metal/hardcore market before delving into the mainstream of popular music. However, perhaps less visibly (and certainly identified less often, if at all, in non-academic literature), NWOAHM artists also replaced the hybridity of nu metal with their own consciously hybrid genre.

> By 2002 even the mainstream had had enough of nu-metal, which had slowly mutated from its exciting early adventures into overblown banality (Rees 2014).

The idea of NWOAHM replacing the declining nu metal genre within mainstream metal/hardcore has become largely accepted by journalists in the years since. The narrative begins from a relatively neutral standpoint: during the first few years of the twenty-first century, nu metal's popularity began to wane within metal/hardcore, if not so immediately in wider mainstream popular culture. Smialek's initial assessment of this period implies nothing more than correlation, highlighting that '[a]t approximately the same time that several prominent nu metal bands first experienced substantial drops in their record sales […] a new strain of metal began attracting wider popularity' (2015, p. 79). However, Rees contends that in the nu metal aftermath 'a roster of bands would give metal a much-needed kick up the arse and set forth the pathway for the scene that continues to this day. It was collectively dubbed the New Wave Of American Heavy Metal' (2014). Writing nearer the time, Berelian argues that '[i]t was inevitable that as the nu-metal bandwagon slowed styles of music from the underground would gradually permeate the mainstream metal consciousness', noting 'the media dubbing these loose clusters of bands with tags such as the New Wave Of Swedish Heavy Metal, or the New Wave Of American Heavy Metal' (2005, p. 324). Here one can locate the beginnings of the causal narrative implicit in Rees' comments, not to mention an indicator of the role of the media in NWOAHM. The supposed inevitability with which nu metal was to be usurped by NWOAHM speaks to the bias of many metal/hardcore participants who consider(ed) nu metal unworthy of inclusion in the pantheon of metal/hardcore proper. From this perspective, the role of the

media grouping together bands espousing various styles and positioning them in opposition to nu metal may be understood as somewhat suspect.[285]

The core of Smialek's nu metal replacement narrative may be found here: '[s]creamo, melodic metalcore, deathcore, and more aggressive variants linked to the NWOAHM all respond to the question "What can replace nu metal once its genre traits most associated with African-American popular music have fallen out of style?"' (2015, p. 84). For Smialek, nu metal was always going to decline in popularity, in part, it would seem, because of its affiliation with specific styles of popular music, implying that popular music styles/genres are less sustainable than metal.[286] Nu metal and metalcore are thus connected through a shared inclination for hybridity: 'the rap-metal hybrid of nu metal became replaced by different hybrid combinations' (Smialek 2015, p. 84). Other parallels between the genres include 'highly personal lyrics in contrast to extreme metal's penchant for the fantastic or supernatural', as well as 'high-quality production values and strategic use of verse-chorus form to manipulate adrenaline' (p. 85). While these elements are indeed shared between nu metal and metalcore, Smialek highlights such similarities in order to differentiate nu metal and metalcore from extreme metal; in so doing, he neglects the influence of hardcore.

The 'hybrid combinations' that replaced nu metal are understood as fusions between metalcore and 'emo for screamo, hardcore punk for "brocore" […], death metal for deathcore, and melodic death metal (e.g. At the Gates, In Flames, early Soilwork) for melodic metalcore' (Smialek 2015, pp. 84-85). Although Smialek explicitly acknowledges hardcore as an influence upon brocore,[287] he fails to note that hardcore has also been integral to emo, which

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[285] Such an interpretation evokes the role of the media, especially Geoff Barton, in positioning various artists as the next big thing in heavy metal under the banner of NWOBHM (Waksman 2009, pp. 176-181).

[286] I do not intend to diminish the element of race in Smialek's analysis – issues of race are becoming more prominent in metal studies (e.g. Dawes 2012) – but his argument essentially hinges on conceptualising extreme metal as distinct from popular music generally, not 'African-American popular music' specifically.

[287] Smialek offers very few examples of this metalcore subgenre, citing only Hatebreed and Emmure, a 'deathcore band' with a '"bro-core" appearance' (2015, p. 94).

multiple scholars consider a subgenre of hardcore (Greenwald 2003; Haenfler 2006; Rios 2015), and to melodic death metal bands like At the Gates (J. Bennett 2009a). These examples of metal/hardcore integration are, of course, part of the symbiotic relationship that afforded the emergence of metalcore in the first place, but they also serve a key function in the nu metal replacement narrative. For while nu metal was eminently accommodating of influence from multiple genres (including, but not limited to, heavy metal, death metal, electronic dance music, and hip hop), there is little to no overt hardcore influence in any prominent nu metal bands. By contrast, metalcore is an explicit metal/hardcore fusion. Nu metal and metalcore are positioned as Other to extreme metal because of their lack of hostility toward mainstream influence; however, conflating nu metal and metalcore deliberately overlooks the influence of hardcore on the latter.

NWOAHM and/as Mainstream

Where metal historians tend to view the late 1990s as the period when nu metal pushed all other metal to the hinterlands, hardcore scholars take an alternative approach. Heanfler's observation that '[f]rom the late 1990s to the early 2000s, hardcore music, particularly *metal*-influenced hardcore, became increasingly commercial' (2006, p. 170; original emphasis), is supported by citing metalcore bands signing to major record labels,[288] touring with famous metal bands, and producing music videos. Hatebreed are the most prominent example of such an artist signing to a major label, releasing their second album, *Perseverance* (2002), through Universal. Indeed, Hatebreed vocalist Jamey Jasta positions his band as something of a catalyst for NWOAHM: '[w]ith the Massachusetts bands following right behind us, we knew they were going to have a lot of success, too. […] When Killswitch first started bubbling up on *Alive or Just Breathing* [2002], those riffs, the drums, Jesse's vocals—we all knew it was going to be very big' (Jasta in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 586). However, whereas Hatebreed's signing with a label the size of Universal was undoubtedly

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[288] Haenfler's examples are Poison the Well signing with Atlantic Records prior to the release of their third album, *You Come Before You* (2003), and Eighteen Visions joining Epic Records before releasing their fourth album, *Obsession* (2004), which was nevertheless originally issued through former label Trustkill Records.

a surprise to many metal/hardcore participants, a major label signing a one-off band without obvious mainstream appeal is not unique. For many metal/hardcore participants, Killswitch Engage signing to Roadrunner Records appeared to be more of an unexpected coup.[289]

Although Berelian claims that it 'was inevitable that such an imaginative band would eventually break away from their underground roots and the move came with a signing to Roadrunner Records in 2001' (2005, p. 178), the members of Killswitch Engage were nevertheless surprised, since '[a]t the time, Roadrunner was pretty nu metal' (bassist Mike D'Antonio in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 587). Though the label would later go on to release albums by other NWOAHM bands like Chimaira and Trivium, the signing of Killswitch Engage might be understood as something of a turning point whereby Roadrunner began replacing its nu metal bands with NWOAHM-era metalcore.[290] Loosely comparable to thrash's move toward the mainstream market during the 1980s, several NWOAHM bands achieved considerable commercial success during the first decade of the twenty-first century.

> Shadows Fall sold over 200,000 copies of *The War Within* [2004] – "What Drives the Weak" and "Inspiration on Demand" even cracked the top 40 of Billboard's Mainstream Rock Chart. By the end of 2007, Killswitch Engage's *The End of Heartache* [2004] was certified Gold by the RIAA, something unthinkable in the 90s. Lamb of God's *Ashes of the Wake* [2004] sold nearly 400,000 copies, and their 2006 follow-up [*Sacrament*] debuted in the top ten (Andrew 2015).

With the backing of major labels (or, at least, the largest independent metal/hardcore labels with extensive distribution networks) NWOAHM's stylistic codification could spread. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, around the time NWOAHM bands were hitting their commercial peak, some participants began criticising metalcore for being formulaic stylistically and oversaturated as a

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[289] Founded as an independent label in Germany in 1980, Roadrunner Records moved into the major label realm when it became part of the Island Def Jam Music Group in 2001 (Brutus 2010).

[290] Though signed to Roadrunner before Killswitch Engage, Chimaira's first album for the label, *Pass Out of Existence* (2001), is best described as a mix between nu metal and metalcore, whereas the band 'joined the New Wave of American Metal movement' (Coyle 2015b) with their subsequent release, *The Impossibility of Reason* (2003).

genre. As early as 2006, metal/hardcore journalist Amy Sciarretto observed that '[i]n today's over-saturated metalcore scene, bands have to stand out from their peers' (2006, p. 39). In much the same way that nu metal was widely understood to have peaked before a decline blamed on major labels flooding the market with deliberately similar-sounding bands, the oversaturation of NWOAHM led to a predictable decay of subcultural capital. Rather than interpret compositional or performance-related decisions as creative implementation and transformation of stylistic building blocks, many participants perceived those artists sticking rigidly to the supposed metalcore formula as doing so in order to appeal to a wider audience, including non-participants, and therefore make more money. Unearth guitarist Ken Susi is pessimistic regarding such an approach: '[a] lot of metalcore bands go straight from a mosh riff to a bright, shiny chorus to make their music more commercial, and I just think if people keep watering down metal with clean vocals, it's going to be nu metal all over again' (in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 572).

Abject Genres

> [Extreme metal] fans are particularly hostile towards certain subgenres that they associate with adolescent audiences and mainstream trends. These "abject genres," as I have termed them, can be thought of as moments in time when metal music became increasingly visible to an audience outside of metal subculture: glam metal (ca. 1985–1991), nu metal (ca. 1997–2002), and metalcore (ca. 2004–present) (Smialek 2015, p. 293).

Smialek's concept of abject genres neatly encapsulates the way many metal/hardcore participants, most obviously those invested in extreme metal but also some more enamoured with traditional hardcore, consider metalcore. Following similar objections to glam and nu metal, some metal/hardcore participants conceptualise metalcore as faux metal, and therefore open to scorn. Smialek investigates 'often gendered and anti-adolescent complaints about simplicity within […] "abject subgenres," a useful shorthand term for nu metal, screamo, and a variety of "-core" subgenres that have been widely criticized by metal fans', establishing 'how a similar perception of radio-friendly stylistic dilution informs negative views towards nu metal and screamo by detailing the prevalence of a screamed-verse, sung-chorus model within these

genres' (2015, p. 66). Crucially, 'extreme metal fans typically view abject genre traits as misappropriations of metal music proper' (p. 66), owing to the perception among some extreme metal fans that such traits are employed strategically to appeal to non-metal fans. As explored in chapter five, many metal/hardcore participants are sceptical of what they consider 'their music' being encroached upon by outsiders from the mainstream. Metalcore is constructed as abject, therefore, because of the perception of the genre as facing outward, deliberately appealing to the mainstream, and thus turning its back on 'real' metal/hardcore participants.

Smialek observes further similarities in the use of personal pronouns and so-called personal lyrical themes in metalcore as an extension of those themes in nu metal. More specifically, 'metalcore lyrics share with nu metal the appeal for listeners to relate directly to a first-person protagonist. Metalcore songs often touch on romantic betrayal, perseverance during difficult times, threats towards adversaries, and fraternal loyalty' (Smialek 2015, p. 89). This is in stark contrast to 'metal subgenres with the greatest capacity for providing its fans with subcultural capital [… that] tend to base their lyrical themes around the supernatural or the fantastic rather than the quotidian or the mundane' (p. 88). However, this reading equates the lyrical themes of nu metal and metalcore without much evidence and, as before, omits the influence of hardcore. While metalcore might share with nu metal a proclivity for using personal pronouns, the actual content of the lyrics is often dissimilar.

Jonathan Pieslak's analysis of identity in Korn's 'Hey Daddy' (*Issues*, 1999) observes that 'singer Jonathan Davis's disturbing personal history has been an important factor within his lyrics [… that] often seem to have focused on tragedies that fell upon children, which he either witnessed during his work in the Coroner's Department or experienced in his childhood' (Pieslak 2008, p. 38). While this song may be a somewhat overt example of themes of abuse present in Korn's music, Pieslak notes that in an 'open competition in conjunction with MTV, giving any fan the opportunity to design the cover for *Issues*', the band's fans appear 'acutely aware of many of the aforementioned themes of childhood sexual and physical abuse which constitute a consistent

underlying theme within Davis's lyrics' (2008, p. 48). Pieslak contrasts the content of Korn's lyrics with those of fellow prominent nu metal band, Limp Bizkit, whose song 'Nookie' (*Significant Other*, 1999) 'describes the plight of a young man whose girlfriend cheats on him and he takes her back because he desires physical intimacy' (2008, p. 50). Although these examples cannot be understood as accurately characteristic of nu metal in its entirety, Korn and Limp Bizkit are undoubtedly two of the most well-known nu metal bands, and in this capacity, they may be understood as representative of nu metal for many metal/hardcore participants (especially those who are not nu metal fans).

Implementing the same logic, one might point to bands like Killswitch Engage, Unearth, or Bleeding Through as representative of NWOAHM-codified metalcore. Direct appeals to first-person protagonists are indeed prominent in lyrics by these bands (as Smialek suggests), but the general topics to which the device is put can vary. Howard Jones' lyrics on Killswitch Engage's *The End of Heartache* (2004) might be interpreted as a sense of hope emerging from trauma, Trevor Phipps explores the negative effects of capitalism on contemporary society on Unearth's *The Oncoming Storm* (2004), and Brandan Schieppati flits between anger and regret in expressions of loss on *This is Love, This is Murderous* (2003). Although the use of the personal pronouns 'I' and 'You' may be understood as describing the protagonists in a romantic narrative in songs like Killswitch Engage's 'Rose of Sharyn' (*The End of Heartache*, 2004) and Bleeding Through's 'Revenge I Seek' (*This is Love, This is Murderous*, 2003), the terms are relatively open to interpretation. Specifically, while such pronouns may be uncommon in extreme metal, they are indeed prevalent within hardcore lyrics, frequently used to present a subject-position the listener may inhabit ('I') against some unspecified other ('You'). Hardcore bands use this adaptable form to write lyrics about revolutionary politics, social awareness, and (admittedly more mundane) personal relationships (Haenfler 2006; Peterson 2009). More direct links between metalcore and hardcore lyrics can be found in examples of Iyaric vocabulary by Killswitch Engage and

Shadows Fall, reminiscent of earlier use by Bad Brains.[291]

Smialek further contrasts extreme metal genres with abject genres by noting that some metal/hardcore participants conceptualise the latter group as 'overly simplistic' (2015, p. 92).

> In contrast to the elaborate song forms of thrash metal, technical death metal, symphonic black metal, and progressive metal, form within glam metal during the 1980s and nu metal in the mid-90s and early 2000s was usually kept to a radio-friendly, four-minute format in verse-chorus form, a tendency presently continued by metalcore (Smialek 2015, p. 92).

While metalcore and nu metal do tend to share a verse-chorus form, in contrast to some more acceptable metal genres, its use in metalcore cannot be attributed to nu metal. As Cormier suggests (Banger 2015a), metalcore form is based primarily on form utilised in hardcore, not to mention the overwhelming predominance of verse-chorus form in popular music more widely. In other words, the problem some metal participants have with metalcore is that it incorporates in a prominent way what they consider to be non-metal influences, in this case: hardcore. This is the same reason some metal participants have issues with nu metal – the genre flaunts its non-metal influences and is not shy in courting a non-metal audience. Metalcore replaced nu metal as the new object of scorn for those metal participants who have long held antagonism to that which is deemed 'not metal'. Not only did NWOAHM-codified metalcore enjoy commercial success and mainstream appeal, but it did so through the prominent integration of hardcore influences. This significant hardcore influence has led some critics to discount metalcore from the realm of metal altogether (Stevens 2013). However, while some participants remain obstinate regarding metalcore's position in metal/hardcore, the genre nonetheless has the capacity to reach previously elusive audiences.

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[291] See Jesse Leach's lyrics to 'Numbered Days' and 'Vide Infra' on Killswitch Engage's *Alive or Just Breathing* (2002), and Brian Fair's lyrics to 'The Power of I and I' on Shadows Fall's *The War Within* (2004). Bad Brains' *Bad Brains* (1982) and *I Against I* (1986) include overt examples of the Iyaric dialect.

Although most of the discussion surrounding NWOAHM-era metalcore replacing nu metal perceives this occurrence as an indictment of NWOAHM's metal/hardcore credentials, many of the artists involved in NWOAHM had the exact opposite intentions. Rather than pander to contemporary mainstream tastes, these musicians initially set about opposing nu metal's supremacy.

An aversion to nu metal led Phil Labonte to leave one of his first bands, Perpetual Doom, and join Shadows Fall, who had recently parted ways with their original vocalist, Damien McPherson, because he was 'gravitating more towards nu metal' (Shadows Fall guitarist Matt Bachand in Wiederhorn & Turman 2013, p. 566). Although both Shadows Fall and Labonte (in new band All That Remains) would go on to become perennially associated with NWOAHM during the early twenty-first century, their initial drive to 'replace' nu metal was based not on commercial desires, but on playing what they understood as real metal. Indeed, one of the reasons for the success of NWOAHM bands may have been the ability to oppose nu metal with a new take on older, more traditional metal/hardcore. Shadows Fall's second album, *Of One Blood* (2000) – the band's first recording with vocalist Brian Fair – exhibited 'the kind of metal that appealed not just to old-school fans but drew in younger aficionados of heavy music too' (Berelian 2005, p. 325).

> The ironic thing is that the bands we came up with, like LOG [Lamb of God], Killswitch, Shadows Fall, All That Remains, and Trivium, which were in some ways a rebellion against the Nu Metal era, have become the new metal mainstream that a whole new generation is rebelling against – hence the rise of the technical, progressive scene and deathcore, etc. (Coyle 2010).

While considering NWOAHM-era metalcore as a replacement for nu metal is usually intended to denigrate metalcore, there is an extent to which the ascription confers praise. As Coyle attests, some of the most significant NWOAHM bands were driven to create their music in response to the apparent hegemony of nu metal (at least within metal/hardcore), and though few

imagined they would become as popular as they did,[292] it would seem their opposition to nu metal was successful. Rather than interpret this ostensible changing of the guard as essentially negative – as representative of a monolithic music industry commercialising another promising underground genre – we might conceptualise the replacement of nu metal as something positive for the rest of metal/hardcore music culture. Cast in an optimistic light, the rise of NWOAHM-era metalcore to the most visible heights of metal/hardcore afforded the potential for a new generation of metal fans being introduced to the music culture through a genre widely-regarded as closer to metal/hardcore's proper (that is, traditional) principles. In this sense, NWOAHM served as a gateway for new metal/hardcore fans to discover 'real' metal.

In part because of the growing dominance of nu metal, 'by the late 90s, the major movements of extreme metal […] had all seen their respective peaks, followed by eventual stasis and disillusion' (Andrew 2015). Critically, this made it 'very unlikely that audiences beyond the small community of devotees would have a chance to discover this music' (Andrew 2015). Lee and Voegtlin introduce their beginner's guide to metal explaining 'various gateways to metal', noting that '[p]ost-nu-metal, kids are listening to "metalcore," a mixture of emo, hardcore punk, and melodic death metal' (2006). Whereas nu metal had somewhat tangential links to more traditional (extreme) metal genres, NWOAHM-era metalcore artists emphasised an overt lineage to past metal/hardcore genres 'celebrating metal's heritage, with influences proudly worn on sleeves' (Rees 2014). As NWOAHM began replacing nu metal on television, it 'brought listeners' attention back to the canonical sounds of thrash, death and black metal – movements which seemed passe and forgotten in the era of nu-metal' (Andrew 2015). Thus, 'with new wave of American heavy metal bands that have a much firmer background in extreme metal beginning to challenge the commercial popularity of nu metal within the wider metal scene' (Kahn-Harris 2007, p. 137), more traditional and extreme metal/hardcore genres enjoyed a resurgence in popularity during the first decade of the twenty-

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[292] 'When we were signing the record contract [with Roadrunner Records] we didn't think we were gonna sell over 2,000 records' (Killswitch Engage bassist Mike D'Antonio in Killswitch Engage 2005; 1:11:31-1:11:35).

first century: 'NWOAHM created an environment where things like the neo-thrash movement could thrive and gain a wider audience' (Andrew 2015).

Somewhat ironically, one of the clearest indicators of extreme metal receiving a new audience and appreciation post-nu metal is the rise of oft-maligned deathcore. NWOAHM-era metalcore may have taken influence from melodic death metal, but deathcore bands like Despised Icon, Suicide Silence, and Whitechapel took influence from brutal death metal like Cannibal Corpse, Deicide, and Suffocation, while Animosity and The Red Chord, took influence from technical death metal and deathgrind like Cryptopsy, Cattle Decapitation, and Dying Fetus. Despite the obvious influence from more traditional forms of metal, deathcore bands were (and sometimes still are) denigrated by some metal/hardcore participants in much the same way that metalcore and nu metal were. Wiederhorn and Turman contend that deathcore bands 'are stuck in a vacuum between trendiness and credibility. For this reason, most, including Carnifex and Emmure, object to being called deathcore' (2013, p. 502). Smialek considers deathcore an abject subgenre for good reason: NWOAHM-era metalcore may have misappropriated aspects of thrash and melodic death metal, but deathcore bands actively appropriated elements of death metal proper. As with metalcore just a few years before, a small group of deathcore bands become emblematic of the genre for many in the metal/hardcore community who considered it abject. The visual style of bands like Suicide Silence and Bring Me the Horizon might be understood as a key reason for deathcore's abject status (Smialek 2015, pp. 81-84), though it is worth noting that this too echoes criticism levelled at NWOAHM-era metalcore bands like Bleeding Through (Sciarretto 2006) and Eighteen Visions (Wiederhorn & Turman 2013).

With the possible exceptions of deathcore and djent (among others), no specific scenes/movements/genres have become especially dominant within metal/hardcore since the heyday of NWOAHM codification. Indeed, '[w]ith the dizzying array of genres competing for attention, there is no central "thing" happening in metal today, only a series of many things making up a greater and steadily more confusing whole' (Andrew 2015). Given the apparent state of

metal/hardcore during the height of the nu metal era, however, we might interpret NWOAHM as having a broadly constructive effect upon the music culture more generally. In this sense, NWOAHM again mirrors NWOBHM. During the late 1970s, some rock critics were 'questioning the continued survival of heavy metal', owing to the supposed corporatisation of rock (rock/metal in the mainstream) and the notion that 'metal no longer had any creative vitality' (Waksman 2009, p. 208). Just as NWOBHM simultaneously brought new, virile metal to the fore whilst also bolstering the underground, NWOAHM introduced aspects of the metal/hardcore underground to the mainstream, re-vitalising remaining underground elements in ways still being felt in the present.

Not confined to metalcore, the consequences of NWOAHM codification can be identified in numerous metal/hardcore genres. Despite metalcore seemingly emerging from hardcore during the 1990s, post-codification metalcore was largely interpreted as a metal genre, diminishing the influence of hardcore. This idea is demonstrated most effectively when observing the retrospective repositioning of artists and artefacts in the wake of NWOAHM codification, causing a realignment of intergeneric associations. The effects of codification also fed competing narratives about the state of metal/hardcore more broadly. For some participants, metalcore became an abject genre that 'began to connote—especially for its detractors—a more commercial dilution of metal music that cultivated a teenage suburban audience' (Smialek 2015, p. 80), with artists deliberately courting the mainstream. However, others consider twenty-first century metalcore as enculturating a new generation of metal/hardcore participants, some of whom have continued the explicit hybridity of metalcore, but just as many, it would seem, utilised metalcore as a gateway to better-established metal/hardcore genres. The wide-ranging consequences of NWOAHM codification underscore the interconnected nature of metal/hardcore genres, illustrating some of the ways by which adaptations in one genre engender changes in many others.

Conclusion

The flexibility of genre has enabled participants to shape metalcore in a number of ways, incorporating diverse influences, establishing new styles and a foothold in mainstream (metal/hardcore) consciousness while retaining the key concept of hybridity and maintaining a following in underground circles. Through NWOAHM codification, metalcore integrated new influences and audiences before narrowing its scope to focus on a few specific influences and styles. These changes in metalcore's characteristics were mirrored in shifting perspectives on the genre in relation to other metal/hardcore genres, to mainstreams and undergrounds, and to metal/hardcore's place in wider discourses of popular music. While the effects of NWOAHM codification were profound, they were not (and are not) destructive or final. It is not the case that artists and artefacts deemed typical of metalcore pre-codification are no longer metalcore post-codification, but simply that codification allows both 'versions' of metalcore to co-exist. While NWOAHM was a particularly overt case of generic codification causing significant changes in not only sonic and visual style, but also in perspectives on metalcore's position in metal/hardcore, more subtle codifications occur more regularly. It is these small-scale codifications that allow, for instance, metalcore to integrate electronics reminiscent of EDM (Crane 2014a) to little fanfare, precisely because the adaptation was relatively minor.

This chapter set out to draw together various strands from throughout the thesis. The role of historiography is explored in relation to a specific genre (metalcore) and that genre's transformations. Metal/hardcore symbiosis is further elucidated by tracking changes in the generic status of metalcore pre-, during, and post-NWOAHM codification, flitting between hardcore and metal such that any single, homogeneous designation becomes unsustainable. The convoluted nature of the metalcore/NWOAHM connection provides ample instances of the dynamic relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena. The specific influence of melodic death metal alongside the incorporation of both clean and distorted vocals demonstrate how particularities of style, drawn from certain scenes, can have a direct impact upon larger conceptions of genre. The NWOAHM codification of metalcore transported the

genre from underground to mainstream, initially adding a progressive edge before many participants writing off the genre as oversaturated and staid. In this way, metalcore is a fitting case study of the various parts that act in the continual construction and reconstruction of genre in metal/hardcore music culture.

Conclusions

During the introduction to this thesis I expressed my intention to explore ways in which genre functions in the experience of metal/hardcore music culture. Consequently, throughout the thesis I have sought to identify and demonstrate those instances where conceptions of genre have directly impacted upon the production and reception of metal/hardcore music. While the significance of genre can be overt in, say, metal/hardcore historiography, genre may be less conspicuous when considering the use of blast-beats. In each of these examples, however, genre can be understood as a central unifying factor, grouping seemingly disparate phenomena. Investigations into these multiple functions of genre, which I summarise below, provoke as many questions as they answer, but it is my hope that the frameworks devised through the course of the thesis engender further serious engagement with genre as essential to musical experience.

Chapter one contextualises the study through a review of primarily academic literature on metal and punk/hardcore, outlining various approaches and methodologies. Examining this discourse, the significance of 'metal studies' becomes apparent insofar as the development of a distinct academic field codified many elements of metal/hardcore inquiry – establishing, for example, an embryonic metal studies canon around texts by Walser (1993), Weinstein (2000), and Kahn-Harris (2007), among others. By the same token, the cultivation of metal studies led to recognition of a previously-understudied music culture, providing the basis for organisational structures that support ongoing research into myriad facets of metal/hardcore. The International Society for Metal Music Studies, its official journal, *Metal Music Studies*, sponsored or associated conferences and symposia, as well as special issues of select academic journals, combine to foster an interdisciplinary research culture focused on metal music. While not completely absent from metal studies literature, the relative lack of 'non-academic' discourse is noteworthy given its abundance and the higher likelihood that participants will interact with it directly. Equally, the abstraction of metal from other forms of popular music, particularly the general omission of hardcore from discussions of metal, is significant. As I

demonstrate throughout the thesis, the connection between metal and hardcore cannot be overlooked, nor metal/hardcore's relationship to other popular music. Thus, chapter one establishes my epistemology and one of the central arguments of the thesis: metal *and* hardcore must be considered together, since both genres have been intertwined for most of their history. Additionally, metal/hardcore must be understood in relation to other popular music, since generic processes, functions, and experiences may be particular, but not unique. Moreover, analysis of academic metal/hardcore literature identifies two further areas addressed directly by my research: the relative paucity of scholarly texts on metal/hardcore in the twenty-first century, and the disjuncture between academic and non-academic discourse(s).

Having established the space in which my research operates, chapter two interrogated metal/hardcore's construction of its own past in relation to its present, and introduced a new model for understanding this relationship: generic symbiosis. In various contexts, metal/hardcore historiography functions as an arena for the accumulation and display of multiple, highly specific forms of (subcultural) capital. This capital, in turn, provides the impetus for continual reaffirmations and reconstructions of metal/hardcore's historical and musical narratives in relation to contemporary perspectives. Consequentiality, identified in both graphic taxonomies and prose-based histories, primarily concerns those accounts that construct metal/hardcore chronologically or, equally problematic, moving from one genre to the next in a pseudo-causal manner. Such literature tends to suffer from a unidirectional focus, separating one genre from the next, subordinating older genres in favour of more recent iterations or perhaps inversely extolling older genres as original and pure. Arborescent models lend themselves to fixed and simplified connections between genres that obfuscate the complex interrelated nature of genre constructs. Organicist models may encounter similar obstacles if too concerned with ideas of some central genre-essence understood to constitute the basis of the original organism. To resolve these issues, I offered the concept of generic symbiosis between metal and hardcore to account for their shared existence and development since at least the 1980s. A more precise arrangement of the organicist metaphor, symbiosis affords identifiable instances of parasitism, commensalism, and mutualism. The

second half of the chapter illustrated metal/hardcore symbiosis through two of the most overt examples, crossover and metalcore. I demonstrated how a recurring notional divide between metal and hardcore has provided creative impetus for musicians who attempt to overcome such a divide, as well as those compelled to maintain and solidify boundaries between the genres. Thus, the notional divide between metal/hardcore functions as a significant creative apparatus for participants, foreshadowing ideas explored further in chapter five. A broad appreciation of metal/hardcore's past affecting its present, and the concept of generic symbiosis in particular, underpin the rest of the thesis, surfacing in various forms throughout the rest of the text. Moreover, the mechanism of symbiosis allows and perhaps engenders the kind of adaptations witnessed in metal and hardcore over their common histories by encompassing both antagonistic and sympathetic connections between the genres.

Chapter three built upon the more general explication of metal/hardcore historiography of the preceding chapter to explore in greater detail the complex inter- and intrageneric connections of metal/hardcore. The chapter's first half detailed the dynamic relationship between small-scale phenomena (performance techniques, compositional devices, vocal delivery) and large-scale conceptions of subgenre and genre. The ubiquity of certain small-scale phenomena has led to development of particular combinations of, say, vocal delivery and drumbeats as indicative of a given genre. Drawing from extant discourse, I investigated terminology commonly used to describe specific instrumental techniques and elements of composition as they are associated with genre constructs. Perhaps the most acute example of the relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena may be found with djent, a genre named onomatopoeically for the sound of a specific guitar technique as produced by an individual artist (heavily palm-muted power chords played by Meshuggah). The second half of chapter three illustrated some of the connections between metal/hardcore genres, and, in finer detail, between subgenres. I employed four umbrella terms (Heavy Metal, Punk and Hardcore, Extreme Metal, Hybrid Genres) in a brief overview of ways in which prominent metal/hardcore genres have been conceived in generic discourse. The necessity of such a task becomes evident in chapters five and six, for instance,

where the significance of death metal mixing with hardcore and metalcore (and vice versa) may only be understood when one recognises the recurrent separation of those genres in the minds of many participants. Intrageneric connections are commonly articulated by adding a prefix or suffix to an extant genre term, thereby qualifying the specific focus of the subgenre. I demonstrated how some subgenre qualifiers describe the integration of otherwise foreign elements of composition and performance (as in symphonic black metal), whereas others prescribe an emphasis upon certain features already established within a given genre (as in technical death metal). The chapter's genre typology serves to illustrate generic interaction at the macro level, while the investigation of instrumental technique and compositional devices explores this interaction at a micro level, with both threads brought together through the use of subgenre qualifiers.

Having provided only tentative definitions for my use of genre, style, and scene up to this point, chapter four explicated in detail how these interrelated concepts operate in metal/hardcore. I explored how genre has been conceptualised in popular music academia in relation to 'musical' rules (Fabbri 1982a), 'extramusical' factors including industry (Negus 1999), and as 'genre worlds' (Frith 1996), contrasting them with genre in metal studies (Walser 1993; Kahn-Harris 2007) and in non-academic metal/hardcore discourse (Christe 2003; Wiederhorn & Turman 2013). Given the diversity of elements they comprise, genre constructs must be understood as multiple, plural, and adaptable; in short, genres may be best conceived as in a state of flux. Conceptions of genre can appear general, all-encompassing, and boundless on the one hand, while on the other seeming restrictive, specialised, and exclusionary precisely because the nature of the genre construct is to adapt to individual usage. Style has been variously considered as distinct from (Moore 2001a) and as synecdoche for genre (Tagg 2013), though much journalistic discourse utilises the terms interchangeably. I employ Dodd's type/token theory (2007) to consider style as instantiating genre, thereby tokening the type. Here, style functions as the means by which participants interact directly with genre, and in that sense elements of style identified as part of artefacts serve as synecdoche for the genre as a whole (hence ostensibly interchangeable

vocabulary). Given the considerable difference in scale between general notions of genre and specific invocations of style, scene serves as a mid-point between the two extremes. Literature on scene suggests distinct scene types such as local, translocal, and virtual (Peterson & Bennett 2004; Haenfler 2015), as well as scenes with focuses on time/place, genre, and ideology. Scenes provide the space in which artists produce artefacts, and in which artefacts circulate, facilitating a connection between style and genre. By considering scenes as rhizomes (Deleuze & Guattari 1987), one can account for complex intersections between numerous scene types and focuses. Indeed, crucial to our understanding of genre, style, and scene is the inherently relational nature of each construct such that one cannot be properly considered without the others.

In chapter five, I explored the some of the internal relationships that occur within genre, style, and scene constructs, proposing that participants utilise various rhetorical tensions as a creative apparatus to adapt, affect, and individualise metal/hardcore music. The recurring friction between fragmentation and homogenisation (Roccor 2000; Kahn-Harris 2007) among metal/hardcore participants can be articulated more directly as mainstreams versus undergrounds, and progressions versus traditions. I demonstrated the necessity for conceptualising these terms relationally and as plural, since both mainstream and underground are most frequently defined as a negative Other and, partially as a result of this ill-definition, are constructed at different strata within and without metal/hardcore. For example, metal/hardcore may be understood as an underground music culture in opposition to mainstream popular music/culture, but, within metal/hardcore, genres like glam metal, nu metal, and metalcore may be constructed as mainstream in relation to more underground genres like death metal, black metal, and grindcore. Furthermore, some participants consider certain subgenres of, say, death metal as more mainstream than others (melodic death metal compared to technical death metal, for instance). In a related fashion, some participants construct specific hardcore bands as upholding sacred elements of generic tradition, while other artists are understood to abandon these principles in favour of progressing the genre.

Issues of agency became apparent when examining mainstreaming and selling out, the primary processes by which artists, artefacts, and even genres move from states of acceptability to unacceptability. Death metal bands like Carcass and Entombed were mainstreamed after signing with major record labels, thereby going against the principles of the underground, according to some participants. By contrast, selling out was shown to refer to an active decision on the part of the artist, interpreted by many participants as deliberately irreverent toward a genre's traditions by attempting to achieve wider popularity by becoming more mainstream, for example. Conceptions of mainstreams/undergrounds and progressions/traditions must be understood together since they are interrelated. Genres like death metal and hardcore are frequently positioned as underground in such a way that one might interpret undergroundness as part of their traditions; however, participants may also suggest that these genre constructs afford progression through adaptation, provided such progressions are not deemed mainstream. The use of these tensions as creative apparatus is therefore indicative of broader interactions within fluctuating metal/hardcore symbiosis. Specifically, this creative apparatus is one of the methods by which generic symbiosis is sustained, ensuring the continued existence of multiple undergrounds positioned as resistant to mainstreams, and traditions constructed as opposed to progressions. The internal creative apparatus provided by tensions like those between mainstream and underground, and between tradition and progression, affords both the literal and ideological preservation of generic norms *and* the generation of new ideas and practices.

After critiquing a wealth of extant literature, and having introduced and interrogated my own concepts and perspectives on how we might better understand metal/hardcore genre, chapter six served to demonstrate how these ideas about genre interact in practice. This final chapter comprises a case study of metalcore, considering how various conceptualisations of the genre might be understood to coexist. Central to this discussion is the overt codification of metalcore during the New Wave of American Heavy Metal (NWOAHM) period of the early twenty-first century, providing a point of

simultaneous confluence and divergence in which older constructions of metalcore were replaced by newer elements of style that were nonetheless subsequently retrospectively repositioned as part of earlier metalcore. The specific example of NWOAHM exemplified a concurrent fixity and flexibility of genre constructs wherein a genre might be understood as clearly limited on the one hand, while appearing eminently adaptable on the other. The codification of metalcore at once reduced the stylistic possibilities of the genre, ostensibly streamlining what was previously amorphous, while at the same time opened metalcore to new influence from formerly separate genres.

NWOAHM's predilection for integrating riffs and harmony from melodic death metal, not to mention the predominance of distorted verse/clean chorus vocal juxtaposition, served to illustrate how complex genre interrelations are created and maintained. Both the influence of melodic death metal and the inclusion of clean vocals were presented during NWOAHM as novel, innovative elements of this new version of metalcore; however, by the time the NWOAHM period had dissipated, these elements had been retrospectively repositioned as part of metalcore history and, moreover, were now interpreted as restricting the genre. Indeed, the consequences of NWOAHM codification affected metalcore's past as well as its future, attenuating the significance of hardcore on the genre's past and accentuating the metal and mainstream credentials of the genre. In the immediate wake of codification, metalcore was positioned by many participants as an abject genre (Smialek 2015) for supposedly misappropriating style from certain genres as well as appealing to a non-metal audience, but more recently, partly due to retrospective repositioning, metalcore has been reinterpreted by some as a gateway to real metal for new, unenculturated (especially young) participants.

Chapter six draws together strands from throughout the thesis to demonstrate how diverse concepts combine in the experience of genre. Metalcore's absence from much metal/hardcore studies literature is largely attributable to the genre's relatively recent emergence as a commercially significant music and the explicit mixing of metal and hardcore – two conditions precluding it from most extant literature (chapter one). Metalcore as an unequivocal combination of metal and

hardcore links quite obviously to generic symbiosis introduced during chapter two, but the case study of metalcore elucidates some of the complex implications of symbiosis: the retrospective repositioning of artists and artefacts as the extent of generic interrelations becomes clear, and notional divides functioning internally to reshape the genre, to name only two. NWOAHM codification offers a demonstrable occasion when small-scale phenomena such as clean vocals became directly affiliated with, first, a genre-based translocal scene and, slightly later, a global genre. During the NWOAHM period, mixing clean and distorted vocals became indicative of metalcore, just as the metalcore appellation was applied to other metal/hardcore that included both vocal deliveries. Codification positioned metalcore as a more explicitly Hybrid Genre, drawing influence from genres in Heavy Metal, Punk and Hardcore, and Extreme Metal. Here, the relationship between small- and large-scale phenomena (chapter three) is manifest through participants' awareness of associations between, for instance, pedal point riffs and melodic death metal, such that the compositional device as used in metalcore is still perceived as a remnant of melodic death metal.

Models examined in chapter four allowed me to negotiate convoluted perspectives of metalcore as style, subgenre, or genre, and NWOAHM as scene or style. While such conceptions are contingent upon the position of the viewer, metalcore is best understood holistically when each of these perspectives is taken into account – metalcore as style exhibits compositional and performance-related traits drawn from multiple genres, metalcore as subgenre of hardcore explains the significance of elements of style from specific metal genres, while metalcore as genre affords these various adaptations. The creative potential of rhetorical tensions (chapter five) is particularly evident in relation to metalcore. Put bluntly, NWOAHM codification moved metalcore from the underground to the mainstream (within metal/hardcore), doing so by employing progressive ideals that drew influence from multiple genres. Older metalcore participants interpreted this move as deliberately selling out and going against the genre's tradition by consciously integrating only those elements of style that would increase commercial viability, a view later shared by NWOAHM participants who construed related

genres like deathcore and djent as moving away from the metalcore tradition. This final chapter thus serves as a distillation of the most significant ideas proffered and explored during the rest of the thesis.

As I have argued throughout, the most important property of genre in metal/hardcore (as in popular music more generally) is the interaction of these various, diverse elements as participants continually adapt the genre construct. Conceptions of symbiosis, observations of rhizomatic scenes, and considerations of rhetorical tensions as creative, cannot be understood in isolation since the very nature of genre in popular music is interconnectedness. Case studies like that presented in chapter six perform a necessary function in their attempt to explicate genre in multiple guises and from a variety of perspectives. When one consciously encounters genre, they are simultaneously experiencing the genre synchronically *and* diachronically. To listen to a metalcore album is to hear and interpret specific sonic utterances as related to metalcore both now and across time. Overcast's *Expectational Dilation* (1994), Atreyu's *The Curse* (2004), and Architects' *Lost Together // Lost Forever* (2014) are all metalcore albums, but each is significantly different from the next. They share the property of documenting the genre metalcore at a specific time, in a specific place, while simultaneously positioning themselves in relation to the genre (and wider metal/hardcore music culture) as it evolves through time; they are both synchronic and diachronic. Accordingly, discussions of genre by all participants, academic or otherwise, must be understood in the same manner, as describing properties both emergent and determinant, synchronic and diachronic.

Inevitably, numerous questions, ideas, and exemplars must be omitted in a project such as this. Indeed, as I suggested at the beginning of this conclusion, avenues for further research abound. Although I focused this study on metal/hardcore music culture, I did so as a lens through which to view contemporary genre constructs. In other words, I see little reason why notions proposed in this thesis cannot be applied to other areas of popular music, especially since I do not conceive metal/hardcore as separate from other popular music. My integration of theories drawn from academic literature on

jazz, hip hop, electronic dance music, and popular music more broadly, was part of a conscious effort to show the reader clear lines of association between various popular musics. Perhaps more so than the rest of the thesis, chapter four speaks most directly to scholars outside metal/hardcore in the broader field of popular music studies since, as I demonstrate, issues of genre and style are prominent in this literature. That said, the significance of scene within metal/hardcore studies should not be interpreted as differentiating this particular music culture from other popular music. Instead, considering genre, style, and scene together as interrelated phenomena (rather than as competing terms) may be a more fruitful way to explore the experience of popular music in the twenty-first century. Similarly, despite my at times unfavourable review of metal studies in chapter one, I do not intend to position the present research as opposed to this burgeoning field. Rather, it is my hope that studies such as mine might further bridge the gap between metal studies and popular music studies, as well as between musicology and metal studies. If nothing else, my thesis should have underscored how fertile this area can be to future researchers. Myriad artists and artefacts cited throughout have received little or no previous scholarly attention of any kind, let alone thorough musicological analyses the likes of which would necessitate a doctoral-length study of their own.

While models of genre, style, and scene here proposed could be abstracted from metal/hardcore and applied to other popular musics, it may be more constructive (and certainly more complex) to employ such frameworks *across* popular music cultures to better reflect the pluralism of contemporary (Western) society. Moreover, as I freely admitted during the study's introduction, my focus on primarily Anglo-American iterations of metal/hardcore stimulates obvious questions about the suitability of such thinking in more global contexts. Although many questions are yet to be addressed, my thesis nevertheless offers a step in the direction of more holistic and reflexive understandings of genre as an essential component of musical experience.

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