MACKLEMORE, IGGY AZALEA, AND CONTESTED AUTHENTICITY WITHIN THE HIP-HOP DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

by

Olivia Rines

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
English

Charlotte

2015

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Elizabeth Miller

_____
Dr. Pilar Blitvich

_____
Dr. Janaka Lewis

ABSTRACT

OLIVIA RINES. Macklemore, Iggy Azalea, and contested authenticity within the hip-hop discourse community. (Under the direction of DR. ELIZABETH MILLER)

Authenticity within the hip-hop community has been a topic of conversation amongst researchers for a number of years. The hip-hop movement started in the 1970's and has steadily grown over the years into a worldwide phenomenon. Although the success of hip-hop is regarded by the majority of the hip-hop community as positive, it has also caused significant issues in terms of (mis)representation and (in)authenticity. One aspect of authenticity that has been foregrounded is race. Can a white hip-hop artist be considered authentic in the hip-hop discourse community? To examine this question, this paper will explore the authenticity of white hip-hop artists Macklemore and Iggy Azalea. In order to explore how their authenticity has been both constructed and challenged by the hip-hop discourse community, authenticity will be considered in two, overlapping forms: authenticity in terms of the linguistic community and authenticity in terms of the hip-hop community. Through an examination of the artists' lyrics, commentary in response to their music videos, and interviews with the artists, I will analyze how Macklemore and Azalea have attempted to construct themselves as authentic hip-hop artists and how others have contested their identity. Through this analysis, I will investigate how authenticity has evolved to include or exclude community members, specifically how authenticity is ascribed or contested when a community member's most visible identity feature (in this case race) does not align with the norms.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my husband, Jason Rines, to my friends, Jessica Mae Harmon and Charles Howell, to my mom, and to my family. Jason, without you, I know that none of this would have been possible. From the beginning, you have pushed me to be a better scholar and a better person. You encouraged me to explore new and diverse paths and to think deeper than I ever dreamed was possible. You are an incredible man and an extraordinary philosopher, and I am truly blessed to call you my own. Mae, my friend and confidant, your support in this process was invaluable. The hours that we spent side by side at the library are some of my happiest memories of this project. You persuaded me to write when I felt like I had no words left, and it is because of you that I finished on time. Charlie, you are a unique and beloved presence in my life. You have taught me so much about the world and have helped me to develop a new understanding of my position as a scholar and an activist. Mom, when I could not stand to look at my thesis anymore, you helped me push through. You read the entire document to check for grammatical errors, and you listened to me talk about nothing else for four months. You are the woman I inspire to be, and I am so grateful for everything you've done for me. Finally, I could not have done any of this without the love and support of my family. You all are my rock, my home, my foundation. You have been there since the beginning, inspiring me to strive for goals and dreams that at the time seemed farfetched. I love you all, and I thank you for all that you have given me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee for their support and guidance throughout this process. First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Elizabeth Miller, for being the finest mentor I could ask for. Her enthusiasm, support, consistent encouragement, and meticulous feedback were indispensable to this project and to the success of my graduate career. I am a better student for having known her, and for that I am eternally grateful. I would also like to thank Dr. Pilar Blitvich and Dr. Janaka Lewis for their contributions as committee members. Dr. Blitvich was a vital asset throughout my time as a graduate student and taught me so much about being an active participant in the field. Dr. Lewis provided a unique perspective that allowed me to expand on my research and develop thoughtful connections between seemingly discrete fields. Without the help of these three distinguished professors, I could not have made it this far.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In 1996, Eminem, a male, white rapper from St. Joseph, Missouri, released his first album, titled *Infinite*. Although he was not the first white rapper to attempt to gain entrance into the hip-hop community, he was by far the most successful. Eighteen years later, Eminem still produces music, and he is a household name when discussing mainstream rap music and hip-hop culture.[1] However, during his rise to fame, Eminem's race presented a number of issues both for the hip-hop community and for American culture at large. As a white man succeeding in a predominantly black community, Eminem threatened commonly held ideas concerning what it means to be authentic in the hip-hop community. His enormous success made him a topic of interest in the hip-hop community but also amongst scholars from a variety of fields, including linguistics, communication studies, and culture studies. Their investigations all circled back to a single question: "What does it mean to be authentic in the hip-hop community?"

In order to investigate this question, this paper considers the authenticity of white hip-hop artists Macklemore and Iggy Azalea. These two artists are of particular interest not only because their authenticity is still being debated but because they represent two

[1] Although there is consistent reference to rap/hip-hop music in mainstream American culture, in the hip-hop community, these terms are not synonymous. According to Bennett (1999), "[r]ap is narrative form of vocal delivery which is spoken in the rhythmic patois over a continuous backbeat, the rhythms of the voice and the beat working together" (78). Meanwhile, hip-hop refers to the culture in which rap is instantiated.

very different sides of the hip-hop community. Macklemore identifies himself as a rapper and desires success and acceptance within the hip-hop community; however, his language and the thematic choices in his music do not align neatly with those of the larger community. Meanwhile, Australian-born rapper Iggy Azalea's decision to appropriate the language of the hip-hop community has led to consistent accusations of cultural appropriation. As a woman, Azalea also faces significant challenges in the community because of her gender. The problematic nature of these two artists make them excellent candidates for examination.

In order to explore how Macklemore and Azalea's authenticity has been both constructed and challenged by the hip-hop discourse community, authenticity is examined in two, overlapping forms: authenticity in terms of the linguistic community and authenticity in terms of the hip-hop community. While authenticity research from these two respective fields does overlap occasionally, for the most part, these fields view authenticity very differently. This paper therefore attempts to blend the frameworks developed by both fields in order to develop a more holistic understanding of authenticity. The new framework is then used to explore how the authenticity of these artists has been both constructed and challenged by the hip-hop discourse community. Finally, this paper investigates how authenticity has evolved to include or exclude community members, specifically how authenticity is ascribed or contested when a community member's most visible identity feature (in this case race) does not align with the norms.[2]

[2] Due to the newness of these artists (both achieved mainstream success in 2012), no scholarly research had been published about them at the time of data collection. Therefore, the literature review will focus on broader ideas and use another white hip-hop artist, Eminem, as an example of the difficulties such artists face when attempting to gain entrance into the hip-hop community.

Identity as a Social Construct

Identity is currently a key topic of conversation in many disciplines. Some scholars argue that due to the rise of social networking, which allows an individual to intentionally shape his/her identity, hiding some aspects and foregrounding others, identity is more fragmented and multi-faceted than ever. As De Fina (2007) notes, "individuals and groups build and project images of themselves that are not independent of and do not preexist the social practices in which they are displayed and negotiated" (p. 371). One's ability to shape his/her identity depending on the context of the situation has led to increased concern regarding one's position in society, particularly in terms of status and acceptance. According to Ciepiela (2011), "identity is central to all human beings as at some point of our life we become concerned with how to understand ourselves, present ourselves to others and comprehend complex relationships between us and others as well as understand others as distinct human beings" (p. 8). Identity is now a foregrounded issue in society, leading researchers to investigate how one's identity is shaped both internally and externally.

However, research regarding identity is not new. Researchers in the field of identity studies have made some important strides, foremost being the claim that identity is not a stable structure located within the self and unaffected by relationships or society as a whole. Instead, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005) point out, "identity is the social positioning of the self and other" (p. 586). It is "a many-faceted phenomenon that is constructed only in the presence of others" (Ciepiela, 2011, p. 8), the product of one's interactions with society. Through these interactions, different aspects of one's identity emerge. For this reason, identity cannot be viewed as a singular thing, but must instead be

seen as a combination of many pieces, some temporary and others more permanent. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), "Identities encompass (a) macro-level demographic categories; (b) local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and (c) temporary and internationally specific stances and participant roles" (p. 592). Identity is therefore the product of some aspects that remain stable, such as demographic categories, and others that occur only within an interaction, such as stance and one's role in an interaction. Through interaction, speakers establish their identities both explicitly and implicitly. This process is known as identity work, during which individuals "align with or distance themselves from social categories of belonging depending on the local context of interaction and its insertion in the wider social world" (De Fina, 2007, p. 372). Individuals project specific identities based on the context of the interaction, often aligning themselves with groups or categories to which they do not belong or creating subtle distinctions within groups that are constructed by society as homogenous (De Fina, 2007, p. 372).

At the center of interaction and identity work is language, the tool by which many individuals craft their identities. As Barrett (1999) notes:

> Speakers may heighten or diminish linguistic displays that index various aspects of their identities according to the context of an utterance and the specific goals they are trying to achieve . . . This practice implies that speakers do not have a single "identity" but rather something closer to what Paul Kroskrity . . . has called a "repertoire of identity," in which any of a multiplicity of identities may be fronted at a particular moment. In addition, . . . speakers may index a polyphonous, multilayered identity by using linguistic variables with indexical associations to more than one social category. (as cited in Fought, 2006, p. 20)

Through the use of language, an individual can index specific elements of his/her identity, which again goes back to the idea that identity is neither stable nor singular but is instead a conglomeration of many variables that can be foregrounded or backgrounded

at will. However, some aspects cannot be controlled, such as ethnicity and gender. Through specific language choices though, a speaker may index that aspect of identity, choosing to speak in a way that marks or conversely suppresses that aspect. For instance, in terms of language and indexing the ethnic aspect of one's identity, non-white individuals may be accused of 'talking white.' 'Talking white' refers to a type of linguistic assimilation, in this case the act of speaking Standard English when the speaker should, at least according to the listener(s), instead be speaking a nonstandard dialect that in often predominantly spoken by the ethnic group to which the speaker belongs. Fought (2006) notes that learning Standard English is "a way of 'getting into the system' and 'learning the game'" (p. 120). There are advantages and disadvantages to 'talking white,' which will be discussed at length in a later section; however, the key idea to take away from this example is that, by 'talking white,' the speaker is indexing a very specific identity, specifically that of white society, which is tied to specific notions of power, wealth, and education.

What this example also reveals is how language choices, specifically non-standard language choices, are often thought about and discussed against the backdrop of standard language or the language of the majority. Language is only seen as a marker of identity when a person's language differs from the expectations of the listener(s): "it is perhaps easiest to recognize identity as emergent in cases where speakers' language use does not conform with the social category to which they are normatively assigned" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588). When the language of the speaker does not fit the listener's expectations, the listener will often regard the speaker's language as a marker of his/her identity. This is where claims of (in)authenticity come into play.

In order to understand language's role in claims of (in)authenticity, one must understand the processes by which a speaker adapts his/her language to fit the needs of the situation. Fought (2006), in her discussion of language's role in the construction of ethnic identity, outlines a number of resources used by speakers to index a specific identity. Among these resources are code-switching, the use of specific linguistic features, the use of discourse features, and the use of a borrowed variety. Code-switching, according to Fought (2006), "allows speakers to index […] two types of membership simultaneously" (p .25). It is "the alternation of languages [or language varieties] within a single discourse or a single utterance" (Fought, 2006, p. 75). The use of specific linguistic features refers to the use of phonetic, syntactic, or lexical features of a language or language variety that indexes a specific ethnic identity. According to Fought (2006), "Some features are so closely tied to ethnic identity that a single use of that feature can serve to identify a speaker as belonging to a particular group" such as the use of habitual *be*, which is directly tied to African American English (p. 22). Meanwhile, the use of discourse features refers to the use of broader elements or ways of using language that are intricately tied to the performance of ethnic identity. Some of these discourse features include (in)directness, turn-taking, jokes, complimenting, and silence. Finally, the use of a borrowed variety refers to the use of "a code that originates outside the ethnic group, but is appropriated by individuals or entire communities for use in constructing their own ethnic identity" (Fought, 2006, p. 22-23). The use of a borrowed variety can include crossing, which is described by Sweetland (2002) as follows:

> Crossing can be characterized as code alternation by people who 'shouldn't' because they are not members of the group associated with the second language or variety they employ. The practice is unlike true code-switching because it requires little competence in the second language and is more likely to involve

> insertion of isolated lexical items such as single nouns, fillers, or idiomatic expressions. (p. 516)

Crossing (and its distinction from code-switching) is linguistically interesting as the speaker deliberately embeds key elements from another language or variety into his/her native speech, resulting in what many claim is an inauthentic language performance. As Guy and Cutler (2011) note, these speakers are "attempting to stylize their speech in ways that deviate from the variety they grew up speaking [and] are open to a charge of inauthenticity" (p. 140). Whereas code-switching is often viewed as an effective means by which to transcend social boundaries created by one's native language or variety, a way to access "all the privileges accorded to being in the dominant group" (Fought, 2006, p. 119), borrowing, crossing, and/or the use of linguistic or discourse features is often associated with inauthenticity.

Inauthenticity, however, can only be understood against the backdrop of authenticity. In order for a speaker to be considered (in)authentic, his/her identity choices must be perceived and judged by a listener, as identity is constructed through social interaction. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity must be approached as "a relational and sociocultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction rather than as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories" (p. 585-586). Through discourse and interaction, speakers construct identities for themselves; however, these identities are equally shaped by the listeners participating in the interaction. The participants in the interaction must recognize the identity moves being made by the speaker in order for the moves to play a role in the construction of the identity of the speaker. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005) note, "identities should not be understood as ontologically prior to the discourse that calls them

forth. […] their actual manifestation in practice is dependent on the interactional demands of the immediate social context" (p. 591). As the speaker makes specific linguistic choices and those choices are recognized by his/her fellow participants in the interaction, the speaker shapes a unique identity that can be recreated or abandoned at will by the speaker in successive interactions.

If one accepts this understanding of identity as "socially real through discourse" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591), (in)authenticity can similarly be understood to be socially constructed through interaction. A community member can determine a fellow member's (in)authenticity through conversation with that member, during which the listener can look for specific criteria that determines (in)authenticity according to the community in question. However, the criteria by which members of a community distinguish each other and distance themselves from nonmembers varies depending on the community. Since the focus of this study is the hip-hop community, authenticity according to their terms will be explored.

Hip-Hop and Authenticity

Hip-hop as a culture, a community, and a social and political movement began in the 1970's as an attempt to "channel the anger of young people in the South Bronx away from gang fighting and into music, dance, and graffiti" (Bennett, 1999, p. 78). Kool DJ Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, and Grandmaster Flash are considered the founding fathers of hip-hop music, responsible for "finding the records, defining the trends, and rocking massive crowds at outdoor and indoor jams in parts of the Bronx and Harlem" (George, 2012, p. 44). This movement, originally underground and isolated from mainstream society, has grown steadily over the past four decades and today is recognized not only

across America but all over the world. Although the success of hip-hop is regarded by the majority of the hip-hop community as positive, confirmation that their music and culture has value and deserves to stand alongside other musical genres such as pop, rock, and country, it also has raised significant issues in terms of (mis)representation and (in)authenticity. Communication studies scholar Kembrew McLeod (2012) states that [w]hen faced with the very real threat of erasure via misrepresentation by outsiders […] hip-hop community members attempt to protect their culture by distinguishing authentic and inauthentic expression" (p. 176). Like many other communities threatened by an influx of interest from the outside world, the hip-hop community has adapted by establishing ways of distinguishing between authentic and inauthentic members, openly challenging those whose authenticity seems questionable.

One important point to recognize is that the hip-hop community is neither monolithic nor homogeneous. Like all communities, the hip-hop community consists of unique individuals with differing opinions and stances regarding community issues. While the discussion below may at times seem to construct the community as uniform, this is not my intention. When I use the term 'hip-hop community' or 'members of the hip-hop community,' I am not claiming that there is community consensus, but rather I am pointing to stances or perspectives that are shared by multiple individuals but which may or may not be shared by the majority of the community as a whole. As such, the ideas presented below represent general ideas that are often supported by the majority of members of the hip-hop community or by scholarship concerning the community. For instance, most hip-hop community members agree on what it means to be authentic within the hip-hop community. However, this does not mean that all members construct

authenticity in the same manner or similarly value aspects of the hip-hop identity construction. Therefore, as the discussion regarding authenticity within the hip-hop community progresses, it is important to keep in mind that the ideas presented are at times generalizations and are not meant to be applicable to all community members.

For lay-people, authenticity within the hip-hop community is often considered to be directly correlated with race. This claim is not without merit. According to Tate (2012), hip-hop "is the face of Black America in the world today. It also still represents Black culture and Black creative license in unique ways to the global marketplace, no matter how commodified it becomes" (p. 65). Hip-hop is seen as a way to connect black people worldwide, a way to create a sense of community despite the distance. For this reason, amongst others, hip-hop culture and black culture are viewed as synonymous by many people who are not a part of either community, despite the fact that the hip-hop community represents only a subset of the black community. For members of the hip-hop community, however, race is a significant factor when determining authenticity. Yet, it is far too simplistic to regard race as the only factor by which to measure authenticity, as authenticity within the hip-hop community is complex and multifaceted. In order to be considered an authentic member of the hip-hop community, a number of factors must be considered.

Since hip-hop is intricately paired with music lyrics, language plays a predominant role in authenticity debates, but not necessarily language as many linguists would describe it. According to Alim (2012):

> "language" in HHNL [Hip-hop Nation Language] obviously refers not only to the syntactic constructions of the language but also to the many discursive and communicative practices, the attitudes toward language, understanding the role of language in both binding/bonding community and seizing/smothering linguistic

> opponents, and language as concept (meaning clothes, facial expressions, body movements, graffiti, and overall communication –"cuz as Beanie Sigel knows, '85% of communication is non-verbal'"). (p. 533)

Alim's claim that language does not necessarily refer to the actual words that leave a person's mouth but instead to identity as it is performed within the community hints at complexity beyond simply race or language as structure. This complexity is unraveled by McLeod (2012), who demonstrates that "the identities of hip-hop community members are constituted vis-à-vis authenticity in both a conscious and unconscious manner" (p. 168). McLeod breaks down authenticity into six major semantic dimensions: socio-psychological, racial, political-economic, gender-sexual, social locational, and cultural.

The socio-psychological dimension "highlights the valorization of individualism and the demonization of conformity [...]. For many, keepin' it real refers to […] staying true to yourself […] 'representing who you are in actuality to the best of your ability'" (McLeod, 2012, p.169). To be authentic according to this dimension, one must not conform to media stereotypes, instead focusing on creating music that is an authentic representation of the self. Tied into this dimension is the concept of "the masses," consumers, typically stereotyped as white, who have no real sense of what hip-hop is and what it stands for. If one's music is too successful among the masses then the musician may be called out for following mass trends, a mark of inauthenticity.

The racial dimension, which was noted above, is centered firmly on the dichotomy of black versus white.[3] As Cutler (2003) notes,

> There is a powerful discourse within hip-hop that privileges the black body and the black urban street experience. […] This creates an interesting double bind for

[3] Black' Americans are often referred to as 'African American,' despite their heritage (African or otherwise), whereas 'white' Americans are often referred to as simply 'American.' The use of the binary here is intentional; it is a way to "expose and challenge the normativity of whiteness by naming it, and making it more visible" (Cutler, 2014, p. 3).

> many white hip-hoppers (WHHs) whose race and class origins are thrown into stark relief by the normative blackness of hip-hop. (p. 212)

Claims such as "White boys shouldn't rap because rap is black!" (as cited in McLeod, 2012, p. 170) are common on hip-hop message boards and mixed into YouTube commentary, as the data will show. Although there have been some successful white hip-hop artists, such as House of Pain and Vanilla Ice, these artists are often "used as symbols to represent inauthentic whiteness" (McLeod, 2012, p. 170). This of course leads to the questions that are the focus of this research. Can a white hip-hop artist be successful despite the fact that he/he cannot claim the 'right' ethnic identity?

The political-economic dimension refers to the act of (not) selling out. According to McLeod (2012), one of the more significant ways to sell out is by going commercial, "that is, the distancing of an artist's music and persona from an independently owned network of distribution (the underground) and repositioning oneself within the music business culture dominated by the big five multinational corporations that control the U.S. music industry" (p. 170). Part of going commercial is having one's music played on the radio, MTV, or any other mainstream mass media channel. Another aspect is producing hit songs that are often valorized by awards from popular awards shows. By associating oneself with mainstream music through any of these components, one opens oneself up to claims of inauthenticity according to the political-economic dimension. This however, raises some important issues, especially in today's society, which is dominated by mainstream artists. Can any of these mainstream hip-hop artists, such as Lupe Fiasco, Kendrick Lamar, or Nicki Minaj, be considered authentic? If not, then where do they stand in the hip-hop community (if they have a position in it at all)? These questions are

important to explore considering that Macklemore and Azalea are often compared to other mainstream hip-hop artists such as those listed above.

The gender-sexual dimension is the most problematic of the dimensions of authenticity as described by McLeod (2012). A dichotomy exists within this dimension also, pitting the 'hard' against the 'soft.' According to McLeod (2012), "these oppositional terms are very clearly gender-specific, with soft representing feminine attributes and hard representing masculine attributes. This type of discourse […] directly comments on either one's gender or sexual orientation" (p. 171). In order to be considered hard, one must act in a masculine, heteronormative manner that does not leave him open to critiques such as 'pussy' or 'faggot.' According to Bucholtz (1999), black masculinity "has long been ideologically associated with a hyperphysicality that involves physical strength, hyper(hetero)sexuality, and physical violence" (p. 444). These concepts are associated with being a 'real man.' However, what McLeod (2012) fails to discuss is how one could index authentic femininity in the hip-hop community. This is most likely due to the fact that rap music is most often associated with urban male culture, despite the fact that women have been involved in hip-hop since the beginning. According to Pearlman (1988), "females were always into rap, had their little crew and were known for rocking parties, schoolyards, whatever it was; and females rocked just as hard as males [but] the male was just first to be put on wax [record]" (as cited in Keyes, 2012, p. 400). Female artists have therefore received less attention by researchers, although their role in the construction of the culture has not been completely ignored.

Ethnomusicology scholar Keyes (2012) identified four distinct categories of female rappers: Queen Mother, Fly Girl, Sista with Attitude, and Lesbian. These

categories are fluid, allowing women to shift between them as needed or belong to multiple ones simultaneously. According to Keyes (2012), they are also considered "representative of and specific to African American female identity in contemporary urban culture" (p. 401). The category of Queen Mother is marked by references to Black female empowerment and spirituality, which, according to Keyes (2012) makes "clear their self-identification as African, woman, warrior, priestess, and queen" (p. 403). Women who identify with this category demand respect and are often linked with Black feminism. The category of Fly Girl is marked by chic clothing, fashionable hairstyles, jewelry, and cosmetics. These women "portray via performance the fly girl as a party-goer, an independent woman, but, additionally, an erotic subject rather than an objectified one" (Keyes, 2012, p. 404). Women who identify with this category celebrate the beauty of Black culture rather than the beauty of mainstream society (full-figured and curvy versus slender and 'correctly' proportioned) and their performance of identity is marked by themes of independence and sexuality.

Keyes (2012) defines the category of Sista with Attitude to include women who see "attitude as a means of empowerment" and who have reclaimed the word *bitch* to mean "an aggressive or assertive female who subverts patriarchal rule" (p. 406). Women in this category are often accused of 'shootin' off at the mouth;' however, they earn respect through their rapping skills. Finally, the Lesbian category refers to the construction of a queer identity. Since hip-hop is known to be homophobic (as discussed in the construction of masculinity), few artists have identified with this category. Through these four categories, the women of the hip-hop community (both the producers and consumers of the culture) can "chisel away at stereotypes about females as artists in a

male-dominated tradition and […] (re)defin[e] women's culture and identity from a Black feminist perspective" (Keyes, 2012, p. 408). However, these women still face overt sexism and sexual objectification, which will be further discussed in the analysis of Iggy Azalea. It must be noted that part of this sexism and sexual objectification comes from outside of the hip-hop community. American society has specific ideas concerning the construction of gender, ideas that are in some cases overtly expressed in the data analyzed below. However, due to the limited scope of this paper, gender will only be considered in terms of how the hip-hop community constructs gender, not how American society in general constructs gender.

Returning to the discussion of McLeod's dimension of authenticity, the socio-locational dimension refers to the community with which the artist identifies. Within this dimension is the dichotomy between 'the streets' and 'the suburbs.' According to McLeod (2012), white-dominated U.S. suburbia is contrasted "with a very specific and idealized community that is located in African American-dominated inner cities, a social location that is often referred to within hip-hop as 'the street'" (p. 171). To be considered authentic, a hip-hop artist must not only come from 'the street' but maintain ties with that community no matter how successful he/she becomes. These ties are often evident in the lyrics of the artist's songs and the community that primarily buys the artist's music. Of course, this means that the artist does not have entire control over his/her projection of authenticity according to this dimension, as an artist cannot restrict who buys the music. By writing lyrics directed towards a specific community ('the street'), an artist may limit the semantic accessibility of his/her music; however, as the artist becomes increasingly

successful, he/she may be criticized as a sell-out simply due to the fact that inauthentic fans are buying the music.

Finally, the cultural dimension "encompasses the discourse that addresses hip-hop's status as a culture that has deep and resonating traditions, rather than as a commodity" (McLeod, 2012, p. 172). Authenticity according to this dimension involves an understanding of the history of hip-hop, which is often referred to as 'back in the day' or 'old school.' One must be raised in a culture that values the history and traditions of the hip-hop community, not just the current music or artists on the radio, and recognizes the polluted nature of current hip-hop. According to McLeod (2012),

> For one to be able to make a claim of authenticity, one has to know the culture from which hip-hop comes. Thus, by identifying the old school and back in the day as a period when a pure hip-hop culture existed, hip-hop community members invoke an authentic past that stabilizes the present. (p. 173)

This stance is essential to the authenticity of a hip-hop community member, as it proves that the artist is not simply using hip-hop as a commodity in order to gain fame or financial success but instead recognizes the shared history that exists amongst and in many ways defines the members of the community.

According to McLeod's dimensions, a musician is considered authentic if he/she stays true to him/herself, is black, does not sell out, is hard, identifies with the appropriate community (typically the street vs. the suburbs), and knows the origins of hip-hop/considers him/herself old school. If a musician is not deemed authentic in terms of one or more of these dimensions, his/her authenticity may be challenged, and his/her acceptance into the community may be debated, delayed, or refused outright. In particular, the most successful hip-hop artists according to society (i.e. the ones whose songs appear on the radio and who have amassed large fortunes) are often accused of

losing their authenticity, of selling out. Their lives and therefore their (in)authenticity are on display for the community and society at large and is therefore openly debated in a number of venues, including online discussion forums dedicated to hip-hop and the comment sections of news articles and the artists' music videos. These debates will serve as part of the data used to consider how members of the hip-hop community construct the (in)authenticity of Macklemore and Azalea.

Eminem: A Brief Case Study of Authenticity

In order to understand how the identity moves of Macklemore or Iggy Azalea shape these artists as (in)authentic members of the hip-hop discourse community, one must have knowledge of how previous artists in this community have combated claims of inauthenticity. Perhaps one of the most successful hip-hop artists who openly deviated from at least one of McLeod's six semantic dimensions of authenticity is Eminem, a male, white rapper who has been active in the hip-hop community since the 1990's. According to Erlewine (2015), he is unequivocally the most successful white rapper in history. Eminem, also known as Marshall Mathers or Slim Shady, was born in St. Joseph, Missouri. He began his career in hip-hop in Detroit at the age of fourteen. According to Erlewine (2015), "Initially, the predominantly African-American audience didn't embrace Eminem, but soon his skills gained him a reputation, and he was recruited to join several rap groups" (para. 2). The methods by which Eminem navigated the racial binary in order to achieve acceptance indicate that acceptance in a community to which a person does not naturally belong is possible as long as the person is aware of the differences and is careful when acknowledging those differences. Dawkins (2010) notes that "Eminem's method requires careful maneuvering, subtlety, and constant vigilance to

operate effectively" (p. 480). In her article, which discusses how Eminem has achieved the status of an authentic member of the hip-hop discourse community, Dawkins (2010) notes that Eminem uses "the black/white racial binary to carve out a niche within the hip-hop market: affiliations with black masculinity provide cultural acceptance and authenticity which fuel his entry into hip-hop culture. White masculinity provides mobility, ambivalence from white audiences, and commercial success" (p. 465). Instead of attempting to ignore the racial differences, Eminem embraces the positives associated with both groups. He has the mobility, social acceptance, and commercial success of a white artist and the cultural acceptance and power of a black artist. This balance is accomplished by paying close attention to what it means to be authentic in the community (according to McLeod's dimensions) and then shaping his identity accordingly.

This, however, does not mean that Eminem is imitating or attempting to 'act black.' Instead, Eminem embraces his identity as a 'white boy,' which flouts McLeod's racial dimension, but at the same time adds a degree of authenticity to Eminem's performance, in that he is not pretending to be anything other than what he is. Eminem is open in that regard, stating "You can only put up a front for so long before people start coming out of the woodwork […] White rappers, if they grew up in the suburbs, should play off it like, 'Hi! I'm white'" (as cited in Dawkins, 2010, p. 466). So, while Eminem cannot recover the racial dimension, at the same time, he is staying true to himself by embracing his identity as a white rapper.

Eminem is also considered hard according to McLeod's (2012) description of the gender-sexual dimension. Numerous critics have discussed "the offensive, antisocial,

irresponsible, dangerous, violent, misogynistic, and/or homophobic nature of his lyrics" (Rodman, 2006, p. 99). These terms are commonly used to describe the hyper-masculinity associated with hip-hop and black masculinity in general. As Dawkins (2010) points out, "Eminem understands that his presence and popularity necessarily exclude other 'hip-hop Others.' This is why he marginalizes homosexuals, celebrities, women, and other white men in his lyrics and business practices" (p. 480). Eminem must maintain the paradigms that have been established within the hip-hop community, including the marginalization of groups of people of which he previously may have been a part. In his production of hyper-masculinity, Eminem proves his understanding of what it means to be a male rapper in the community and articulates his alignment with the group's ideologies.

Eminem is also considered authentic according to the socio-locational dimension. His connection to the lower-class streets of Detroit allows Eminem to position himself as outside typical, white, suburban, middle-class America. As Dawkins (2010) notes:

> His childhood experiences in Detroit, a city whose black population exceeds eighty percent according to the U. S. Census Bureau, provided firsthand knowledge of and contact with African-American culture. By emphasizing his white identity through the lens of class, he is most likely to gain black acceptance which fuels white ambivalence. (p. 476)

This is consistent with Eminem's method of playing up that which earns him acceptance. His connections with the lower-class Black community, referred to as 'the streets,' helps him authenticate his identity as a member of the hip-hop community.

His connection to 'the streets,' where he participated in rap battles prior to achieving fame, also allowed Eminem to learn about the origins of hip-hop. In fact, throughout his rise to fame, Eminem has been careful about acknowledging hip-hop

artists who inspired him. When accepting a Grammy in 2003, "he humbly accepted the award and paid homage to the emcees that paved the way for and inspired him" (Dawkins, 2010, p. 478). He has also written numerous songs that serve as tributes to the big faces of hip-hop. Through his careful references, Eminem reminds his audience that he is more than a guest in the community and that he has the personal history and knowledge to support his position in the community.

Eminem, however, has not been immune to criticism. Most of the criticism stems from Eminem's inability to ever truly understand the burden of being black. Although he can, in some ways, understand what it means to be othered since he is a white man in an otherwise black community, Eminem can never truly understand the struggle because he has all the privileges associated with whiteness. Dawkins (2010) describes various critiques of Eminem by journalists, fans, and fellow artists, including that Eminem has ignored "his role as the Other in the world of hip-hop," that Eminem can "never understand the experiences of blackness," and that Eminem's success in hip-hop can be correlated with "the large degree to which whiteness fuels record sales" (p. 478). This means that, while Eminem may have found success and acceptance in the hip-hop community in general and is recognized as a hip-hop artist by mainstream society, he will never be fully accepted by all members because, for them, he will always be an outsider. As Dawkins (2010) concludes, "[t]hese controversies are evidence that Eminem cannot occupy a comfortable or permanent place in hip-hop" (p. 479).

This case study shows that the racial dimension of authenticity continues to be a topic of discussion for members of the hip-hop community. However, because some community members accept Eminem as an authentic member, this case study also

provides evidence that the racial dimension is not necessarily the gate-keeper that it appears to be. If an artist constructs him/herself authentically according to other dimensions, he/she may be accepted by the majority of community members.

Linguistic Authenticity and the Hip-Hop Discourse Community

One dimension that McLeod (2012) did not include in his exploration of authenticity is the linguistic perspective. Linguistic authenticity is grounded in the concept of indexicality, which "connects utterances to extra-linguistic reality via the ability of linguistic signs to point to aspects of the social context" (de Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006, p. 4). As discussed above, speakers employ certain linguistic elements to index themselves as specific types of people and (dis)align themselves with specific groups. This constructed identity is specific to the interaction, meaning that it can be extended or abandoned at will by the speaker when he/she engages in the next interaction. The identity choices made by the speaker are based on his/her understanding of the identity he/she is attempting to construct, on what it means to be part of this group or be this type of person. As de Fina, Schiffrin, and Bamberg (2006) note:

> Indexing identity in everyday face-to-face interaction is both reflective and constructive of social reality. On the one hand, speakers use indexicality to project identities based on social norms and expectations about what it means to be a certain kind of person or to act in a certain kind of way; on the other hand, they can use the same tacit understandings to build new associations and therefore to construct new types of identities. Thus indexical relationships are never given, but are continuously negotiated and recreated by speakers because of the infinite possibilities inherent in the association of signs and meanings. (p. 5)

This means that speakers rely on their interpretations of what it means to be a certain type of person when constructing identities for themselves. The subjective nature of this process suggests that each person's identity construction will be individualized and may draw on different aspects of a socially-constructed identity. For instance, returning to the

example of 'talking white,' Fought (2006) discusses Urciuoli's (1996) study, in which "[t]he listeners consistently linked educated sounding voices to whiteness, although not all the speakers identified this way were in reality white" (p. 116). Speakers who 'talk white'/speak Standard English are often associated with specific identity constructions, such as the middle-class, educated white person, regardless of whether the speakers actually fit those categories. Language, therefore, must be recognized as a key concept in the creation of social identities and consequentially in the (in)authentication of speakers.

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) discuss language's role in the construction of (in)authenticity. They make a key differentiation between 'authenticity' and 'authentication,' asserting that "[w]here authenticity has been tied to essentialism through the notion that some identities are more 'real' than others, authentication highlights the agentive processes whereby claims to realness are asserted" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 385). Similar to indexicality, the process of authentication is centered on language and occurs through interaction. By speaking the correct dialect/variety/language according to the context of the situation, the speaker authenticates him/herself and indexes an identity that is tied to specific notions of being in the world. For example, in their discussion of Hindu nationalists, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) assert:

> [L]anguage contributes to nationalist identity formation by providing a sense of cohesion and unity for its speakers. Once the identity of a language and its speakers becomes authenticated through nationalistic rhetoric, the language variety itself comes to index particular ways of being in and belonging to the nation-state. Everyday conversation then becomes the vehicle for authentication practices, as speakers are able to index various ethnic and nationalist stances through language choice. (p. 385)

The process of authentication versus the concept of 'being authentic' requires agency on the part of both the speaker and the audience. As Rodman (2006) notes, "we need to

remember that authenticity must always be *performed* to be recognized and accepted as such" (p. 106). The speaker chooses to speak a certain way, which may authenticate his/her identity as a member of a group to which the audience belongs, and the audience (in)authenticates the speaker based on their experiences with the identity that the speaker is attempting to perform. This means that a speaker may be authenticated by one audience and unauthenticated by another, based on the audience's experiences. Once the speaker has been authenticated, his/her way of speaking indexes specific identity constructions, such as race, gender, education, and socioeconomic class.

As stated above, through specific language choices, a speaker can construct a certain identity for his/herself. Language patterns and varieties have therefore been heavily researched by scholars. Perhaps one of the most widely studied non-standard language varieties is African American English (AAE). AAE is also known as African American Vernacular English. However, as Cutler (2014) notes, "[l]abeling the speech of all African Americans a 'vernacular' has overtones of racism and essentialism and fails to describe the range of standard forms spoken by some" (p. 3). The speaking patterns associated with Black Americans will therefore be termed AAE for the duration of this paper. Fought (2006) defines AAE as "a variety spoken by many African-Americans in the USA which shares a set of grammatical and other linguistic features that distinguish it from various other American dialects" (p. 46). Fought (2006) identifies seventeen of the most common features of AAE, including the existential *it* (used as an empty subject, such as "it's some donuts in the break room), the absence of the third person singular –s ("She have 10 books"), the zero copula ("He in the bathroom"), the habitual *be* ("My room be dirty"), the stressed *been* (used to indicate that something is true for a long time,

such as “He been ask her that”), the completive *done* (“She done told me that”), the use of *ain’t* for negation (“I ain’t kidding”), the negative concord (“Can’t nobody trick us”), and the preterite *had* (use of *had* + past tense instead of simple past, such as “I had stumbled” to mean “I stumbled”) (p. 48-49). Although some of these features are also common is language varieties other than AAE, the combination of these features in a speaker’s utterances mark the speech as AAE.

AAE, however, is not simply defined by morphological and syntactic features, although these are the features that have been most thoroughly researched by scholars. The use of this language variety indexes specific ideologies associated with Black culture. As Cutler (2014) notes, AAE is “a communication system that functions both as a resistance language and as a linguistic bond of racial and cultural solidarity for African Americans” (p. 3-4). In speaking AAE, speakers not only index a Black identity, they invoke ideologies concerning the politics of race and the history that is intertwined with the language.

AAE is also the language from which hip-hop originated. As Cutler (2014) remarks, “[t]he centrality of African American culture within Hip Hop culture is undisputed, as is the connection between AAE and the speech style associated with hip hop” (p. 4). The hip-hop community has adapted AAE to fit the needs of their community. Through that adaptation, a new language style emerged that indexes not only the hip-hop community but “temporary alignments and stances that typify everyday interactions among speakers” (Cutler, 2014, p. 6). By differentiating between AAE and the language style of the hip-hop community, one creates an important and necessary distinction between the language that a person was socialized with from an early age and

the style adopted by an individual to index a specific community and socially-constructed identity. The language style of hip-hop is adopted by choice as a way to show alignment with the hip-hop community and its ideals.

This style has been given many names by linguists. One of the most popular is Alim's Hip-Hop Nation Language (HHNL). According to Alim (2012), "HHNL can be seen as the *submerged area* [of AAE] that is used within the HHN, particularly during Hip Hop-centered cultural activities, but also during other playful, creative, artistic, and intimate settings" (p. 535). HHNL can therefore be seen as the language used by speakers not only when they are performing but also when they are participating in other activities with fellow members of the hip-hop discourse community. By speaking HHNL, speakers index themselves as members of the hip-hop discourse community. This creates a sense of belonging and unity amongst the speakers and allows for speakers to identify fellow community members.

Membership in the HHNL speech community requires linguistic knowledge as well as cultural knowledge. According to Hymes (1974),

> Membership in a speech community consists of sharing one or more of its ways of speaking—that is, not in knowledge of a speech style (or any other purely linguistic entity, such as language) alone, but in terms of knowledge as well as appropriate use. There are rules of use without which rules of syntax are useless. (as cited in Alim, 2012, p. 555)

To be considered an authentic member of the hip-hip community, a speaker must know HHNL as well as the pragmatic features that accompany it. A speaker must be able to use the appropriate cultural modes of discourse depending of the context of the situation.

Linguistic authenticity within the hip-hop discourse community has been studied by a handful of scholars. In order to be considered authentic, a speaker must adapt his/her

speech style to fit the community with which the speaker is trying to align him/herself. The use of the speech style, in this case HHNL, is not always overt. While some hip-hop artists may consistently speak in a mixture of AAE and/or HHNL, other artists, particularly those who feel secure about their position with the community, may not feel the need to broadcast their membership to the community in linguistically overt ways. As Cutler (2003) remarks:

> Core [white hip-hop artists] feel secure about their right to be in hip-hop and are quite candid about race and class. Furthermore, they do not feel the need to signal their hip-hop identity in linguistically overt ways. The more peripheral [white hip-hop artists] tend to orient more to the idea that authenticity is rooted in one's connection to the street or the urban ghetto. They feel obliged to establish their credibility by placing themselves semiotically closer to the urban ghetto and by obscuring the racial and class boundaries that separate them from the urban African American community. They are also more inclined to make overt use of speech markers highly associated with AAE. (p. 215-216)

The language patterns of a hip-hop artist therefore do not necessarily indicate the member status of the speaker; however, this concept is often determined on a case by case basis, as some artists' use of HHNL may be seen as overcompensation, while others' speech may not, depending on their status within the community.

At the same time, a speaker should not attempt to claim membership within the hip-hop community via cultural appropriation. In other words, in order to be an authentic member of any speech community, a member must have access to the community through means or methods that are deemed appropriate by other members of the community. According to Guy and Cutler (2011), "a speaker's successful linguistic identification with another group requires 'adequate access to that group' […] and 'the ability to modify one's own behavior'" (p. 142-143). Guy and Cutler (2011) discuss white hip-hoppers who have had limited access to African American English. These

speakers, despite their desire to be recognized as authentic members of the hip-hop discourse community, do not have the proper access to the community to allow them to alter their speech style enough to claim authenticity.

Another form of cultural appropriation stems from what Bucholtz (1999) calls an "ambivalent cultural and linguistic desire" that is often associated with accusations of 'acting black.' When speakers utilize AAE or HHNL simply to construct a 'Black' identity for themselves, Bucholtz (1999) argues that their speech is neither AAE nor HHNL but CRAAVE (cross-racial AAVE), a speech pattern that "does not correspond to most African Americans' linguistic patterns" but instead draws on specific aspects of AAE phonology, syntax, and/or morphology. This form of linguistic appropriation does little to align speakers with authentic members of the hip-hop discourse community, as "it tends to keep the social order intact by preserving ideologies of race, gender, and language" (Bucholtz, 1999, p. 456).

As with any community, one's language choices and the intention behind those language choices must be carefully considered when one constructs his/her identity in an effort to be regarded as a member or the hip-hop community. In order to construct an identity that is considered authentic according to the standards of the hip-hop discourse community, a speaker must not only consistently perform authentically according to McLeod's six semantic dimensions of authenticity but must also adapt his/her speech style to fit the community as well as to the individual situation. This means, of course, that each speaker's attempt at authentic performance will be unique and that a speaker may appear authentic in one situation or according to one community member while appearing inauthentic in another situation or according to another community member. In

this way, the linguistic authenticity and community authenticity of the hip-hop community is complex and layered, meaning that authenticity cannot be considered a stable condition but must be reconsidered within each new situation.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

As discussed above, at the time of data collection, no scholars had produced research regarding Macklemore and Iggy Azalea as potential members of the hip-hop discourse community. It is therefore important to provide as much information about these artists as possible in order to create a sufficient backdrop against which the artists can be analyzed. Part of the way Macklemore and Azalea construct their identities is based on their personal histories – demographic information that contributes to the more stable aspects of their identity constructions. Therefore, a short biographical section is provided for each artist below.

Macklemore

According to *Bio.* (a website that provides biographical information on over 7000 famous people), Macklemore, also known as Ben Haggerty, was born in Seattle, Washington in 1983. Macklemore is part of a title-credited duo known as Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, in which Macklemore is the rapper and Ryan Lewis acts as the producer. Although the duo did not achieve mainstream success until 2012, with their release of the major hit "Thrift Shop," Macklemore has been an active part of the hip-hop scene since the early 2000s, teaming up with Ryan Lewis in 2010. They released their first album, "The Heist," on their own independent label in 2012, an interesting twist considering most artists who achieve mainstream success have signed with a traditional record label. What is perhaps most intriguing about the duo is "their innovation and reliance on ideas

and lyrics that go against much of hip-hop's traditional swagger" ("Macklemore Biography," 2015). Instead of focusing on common themes associated with hip-hop, such as violence, drug use, women, and money, Macklemore and & Ryan Lewis have routinely released songs with political messages, such as "Same Love," which focused on LGBTQ rights ("Macklemore Biography," 2015).

Iggy Azalea

According to *Bio.*, in 1990, Iggy Azalea was born as Amethyst Amelia Kelly in Sydney, Australia. She moved to the United States at the age of sixteen, where she immersed herself in the hip-hop community, which she had loved from afar since an early age. She moved around the United States for a few years, living in Houston and Miami, before she settled in Atlanta, which was where she mastered the southern drawl and rap style for which she is known. She moved yet again in 2011 to Los Angeles, where she released the mixtape *Ignorant Art*. The year 2012 was a turning point for Azalea. She began collaborating with T.I., a Southern rapper who acted as a mentor and manager, landed a modeling contract with Wilhelmina Models International, and was put on the cover of *XXL* magazine (a leading hip-hop magazine and website) for their annual Top Ten Freshman issue. As the first female, non-American hip-hop artist to make the list, Azalea received a lot of exposure, which helped her sign her contract with Mercury Records, who released her first album in 2014, titled *The New Classic* ("Iggy Azalea Biography," 2015). The combination of her foreign roots, her dueling passions (modeling and hip-hop), and her short time in the hip-hop community have made her the focus of significant positive and negative attention from multiple sources.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Procedure

As the literature review indicated, authenticity within the hip-hop discourse community is a multi-faceted phenomenon that involves an analysis of cultural and linguistic performance. This analysis explores two questions:

(1) How do Iggy Azalea and Macklemore attempt to construct themselves as authentic members of the hip-hop discourse community?

(2) How does the hip-hop community construct/challenge these artists' authenticity?

In order to examine these questions, authenticity is considered in two, overlapping forms: authenticity in terms of linguistic features associated with the hip-hop community and authenticity in terms of cultural dimensions of the hip-hop community.

For the purpose of this study, three sources of data were utilized: album lyrics, interviews, and YouTube commentary in response to the artists' music videos. In terms of album lyrics, Macklemore and Azalea have each released one album to the mainstream public. While they have also released mixtapes, these are not included in the analysis of lyrics presented in Chapter 4. Macklemore's album, *The Heist*, was released in 2012 and consists of seventeen songs (approximately 10,100 words). Azalea's album, *The New Classic*, was released in 2014 and consists of fifteen songs (approximately 6500 words). For the purposes of this analysis, five songs were selected from each album for analysis.

The songs were selected based on how the song lyrics overtly related to McLeod's (2012) semantic dimensions of authenticity. Once selected, the song lyrics were analyzed for themes. This thematic analysis focused on how the artists attempted to construct themselves as linguistically and culturally authentic participants in the hip-hop community, an analysis which relied on McLeod's (2012) six semantic dimensions of authenticity, Keyes' (2012) discussion of gender in hip-hop, Alim's (2012) construction of HHNL, and Reyes' (2005) analysis of African American Slang.

In Chapter 5, two interviews with each artist are analyzed. The interviews were conducted by two popular hip-hop radio shows – Ebro on Hot 97 and The Breakfast Club – and posted to YouTube. Macklemore's interview with Ebro on Hot 97 occurred in December 2014 and lasted 1 hour 7 minutes, while his interview with The Breakfast Club occurred in August 2013 and lasted 26 minutes. Azalea's interview with Ebro on Hot 97 occurred in June 2013 and lasted 27 minutes, while her interview with The Breakfast Club occurred in April 2014 and lasted 22 minutes. This analysis centers on how the artists constructed themselves as members of the hip-hop community in relation to McLeod's six dimensions of authenticity. The analysis also looks at how the interviewers aided the artists in their construction or, conversely, how the interviewers challenged the artists' constructions.

In terms of the YouTube commentary, discussed in Chapter 6, Macklemore has released nine music videos on YouTube, six of which are based on songs from *The Heist* (Deluxe Edition). Azalea has released six music videos on YouTube, five of which are based on songs from *The New Classic* (Deluxe Edition). In order to analyze the salient commentary in response to these music videos, the top sixty comments, along with the

replies to these comments, were sampled from each of the fifteen music videos. When sorted by 'top comments' on YouTube, the comments with the most replies are brought to the top of the list. Therefore the top sixty comments from each music video that make up the sample are perhaps the most linguistically fruitful, as they received as many as 500 replies. The sample of YouTube commentary therefore consists 900 original comments (60 comments per video, with a total of 15 videos) and approximately 4100 replies to these comments (replies range from 0 replies per comment to 500 replies per comment), for a total of approximately 5000 turns. Once collected, the sample was analyzed, with a focus on how commenters responded to the artists and their music videos, specifically on how the commenters attempted to construct or challenge the artists' authenticity according to McLeod's dimensions and dimensions of linguistic authenticity as described by Alim (2012) and Reyes (2005).

In order to protect the anonymity of the commenters, the commenters' screennames were replaced with pseudonyms and all other information that could identify the commenters (their picture, gender, age etc.) was removed. Due to the publicly available nature of this data, IRB approval was not required. This conclusion is in line with Page, Barton, Unger, and Zappavigna (2014), who connected a researcher's right to analyze online data to two contingencies: "whether the material is made publicly available and [whether it is] considered to be free from privacy restrictions" (p. 64). In this case, YouTube commentary can be viewed by any individual who accesses the website, as the website is publicly available and does not require that the user login. There is therefore no expectation of privacy. However, should the commenter want to maintain anonymity, as many commenters do, the commenters can protect their privacy

by choosing screennames that do not reveal personal information. Also, while commenters can select pictures to accompany their username, this is an optional feature. Therefore, a commenter can maintain anonymity by not posting a picture. Finally, comments can be removed by the commenter at any time, meaning that the commenter has full control over what he/she posts, how long the post remains on YouTube, and the level of anonymity the commenter would like to maintain.

For the most part, the analysis of each of these three types of data is thematic. According to Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012), "[t]hematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes" (p. 10). This analysis therefore seeks to illustrate how Macklemore and Azalea attempt to construct themselves as authentic members of the hip-hop discourse community through the discussion of overt themes present in their album lyrics, interviews, and YouTube commentary. Excerpts from each type of data were explicitly chosen to demonstrate how Macklemore, Azalea, and members of the hip-hop community grapple with McLeod's six semantic dimensions of authenticity: the socio-psychological, racial, political-economic, gender-sexual, social locational, and cultural.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF LYRICS

Introduction

Lyrics are perhaps the most intimate of the three types of data, as an artist's connection to the song is usually personal. Both Macklemore and Azalea rap about experiences from their own lives, which allows for their performance of authenticity and position within the hip-hop community to be closely scrutinized through an analysis of their lyrics. In the following analysis, five selected songs from each artist will be analyzed for themes and connections to McLeod's six semantic dimensions of authenticity. This analysis will also look at each artist's language use, specifically word choice and evidence of elements of AAE and/or HHNL. In terms of word choice, the analysis will look specifically at the use of what Reyes (2005) terms African American slang (AAS). Slang in general is defined by Eble (1996) as "an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion is society at large" (as cited in Reyes, 2005, p. 512). The use of AAS does not necessarily indicate that the speaker is speaking AAE, as AAS is often "taken up by mainstream Americans because non-mainstream lifestyle and speech are seen as inventive, exciting and even alluringly dangerous" (Reyes, 2005, p. 509); however, speakers who appropriate AAS separately are often the subject of criticism. They are accused of appropriating the positive aspects

of the culture without suffering the negatives, similar to the criticism of Eminem. Therefore, given Macklemore and Azalea's position as potential members of the hip-hop community, they are more likely to use AAS as one of many aspects of hip-hop culture that they have adopted.

Iggy Azalea's *The New Classic*

The deluxe edition of Azalea's first album is comprised of 15 songs and includes five featured artists. Her songs frequently discuss her dream of reaching mainstream success and how hard she has to work to reach that dream. The five songs selected for analysis were chosen based on how the lyrics to these songs overtly relate to McLeod's semantic dimensions of authenticity. Table 4.1 shows an overview of the themes and semantic dimensions that are featured in each of the selected songs.

Table 4.1: Themes and dimensions of authenticity in Azalea's lyrics

Song	Theme(s)	McLeod's Dimension(s)
Walk the Line	Living the high life, working hard for success, solo life	Socio-locational, political-economic, socio-psychological
Fancy	Being fancy, living the high life	political-economic, gender-sexual
Work	Working hard to make it	Socio-psychological, racial, socio-locational, cultural
Goddess	Being the best, beating the competition	Racial, gender-sexual
Lady Patra	Queen of the rappers	Socio-psychological, gender-sexual, cultural

The following analysis features excerpts from each of the songs to illustrate how Azalea constructs herself according to McLeod's semantic dimensions of authenticity. The full lyrics for each song are located in Appendix A.

The Socio-Psychological Dimension: Keepin' It Real

McLeod's socio-psychological dimension focuses on an artist representing his/her actual self to the best of his/her ability. Azalea does not overtly lie about herself or her upbringing in the selected songs. This is supported by the fact that references to her personal life coincide with published information about Azalea. However, she often makes deliberately vague references to her own life, perhaps in attempt to either make her life sound harder than it was or to make her songs more accessible to her audience. Azalea discusses her personal life in three songs: "Work," "Lady Patra," and "Walk the Line." "Work" is perhaps Azalea's most personal song, as it discusses Azalea's struggle to get to the United States and start her hip-hop career. In Excerpt (4.1), Azalea discusses her struggle to make it to America:

Excerpt (4.1)

1 3 jobs took years to save
2 But I got a ticket on that plane
3 People got a lot to say
4 But don't know shit bout where I was made
5 Or how many floors that I had to scrub
6 Just to make it past where I am from

7 No money, no family. 16 in the middle of Miami.

Lines 1-6 are the last lines of the first verse, while line 7 (which occurs in the song directly after line 6) is a one-line verse that is repeated throughout the song. In lines 1-2 and 5-6, Azalea states that it took her years of working three jobs to save up the money to get her airline ticket to America. Whether this is true or not is unclear; however, this excerpt constructs Azalea as a hard-working and driven individual who would stop at nothing to achieve her dream. In lines 3-4, Azalea subtly critiques the 'people' who criticize her yet do not even know about where she came from (Australia). In lines 5-6,

Azalea also constructs herself as someone who was willing to do anything, even scrub floors, in order to escape Australia. This desire to escape stems from Australia's aversion to hip-hop. This aversion is further discussed in Excerpt (5.9) in Chapter 5, during Azalea's interview with The Breakfast Club. Line 7, which reoccurs throughout the song, paints a dramatic picture of Azalea, as a young girl of 16 living without family or money in Miami, thousands of miles from her home. This somewhat tragic depiction of Azalea's teenage years constructs an identity for Azalea that is beneficial, in that she appears to be honest about where she came from and what she had to go through to become successful. Azalea also constructs herself as someone who was willing to put in the hard work to achieve success, a quality that is highly valued in the hip-hop community.

Azalea also references her personal life in "Lady Patra," when she states "And I'm thummin' through designers to pick which'll fit me proper / Paid dues, climbed through the ranks, but we ain't Shabba." The first line refers to Azalea's modeling career, which she discusses in her interview with The Breakfast Club. The second line talks about paying the dues and working her way up in the industry. The final clause in the second line is a play on the name Shabba Ranks, a famous reggae artist. These two lines both positively and negatively construct Azalea. She is again being honest about her career; however, her reference to her modeling career may not have been wise, as she has been criticized by both the modeling industry (see Excerpt [5.7] in Chapter 5) and the hip-hop community for not being completely dedicated to either. Azalea's flaunting of what is often viewed as an elitist career could be detrimental to how others perceive her authenticity or to her acceptance within the hip-hop community. The second line,

however, is more favorable, as it again references the struggle that Azalea endured in order to achieve what she has.

Finally, in "Walk the Line," Azalea makes numerous references to being 'real,' one of the most overt being "If I didn't live it, won't ink about it." She reminds her audience that she only raps about what is real, what she actually experienced. If she did not experience it, she would not 'ink' about it, meaning that she would not write songs about it. These three examples show that Azalea is putting a great deal of effort into getting her audience and the hip-hop community as a whole to accept her as authentic in terms of 'keepin' it real.' Overall, Azalea constructs herself favorably according to the socio-psychological dimension; however, she is not perhaps as authentically 'real' as other members of the hip-hop community might like her to be.

The Racial Dimension: Whiteness within Black Cultural Expression

Azalea addresses race in two of the selected songs from *The New Classic*: "Work" and "Goddess." In both songs, Azalea does not pretend that her whiteness is not an issue. Instead, in "Work," she recognizes that, as a white woman, her dream to become a hip-hop artist as an uncommon dream, while in "Goddess," she challenges listeners who take issue with her position as a white rapper in a predominantly black community. In "Work," Azalea raps: "White chick on that Pac shit / My passion was ironic / And my dreams were uncommon." These three lines refer to Azalea's time as a teenager in Australia. In line 1, Azalea labels herself as a 'white chick' who was a fan of Pac, which refers to Tupac, a very famous rapper at the time. She then goes on to state that her passion, either for hip-hop in general or for Tupac specifically, was ironic. Azalea implies that it was ironic for her as a white teenager in Australia to be a fan of hip-hop and of

Tupac. As stated earlier, Australians are not known to be fans of hip-hop, which is why Azalea refers to her dreams as uncommon and her passion as ironic. In these three lines, Azalea confronts her identity as a white rapper and a potential white member of the hip-hop community. She does not pretend to be unaware of the challenges she faces because of her race or nationality, which ironically helps her to construct herself as 'real.'

However, this matter-of-fact attitude is not Azalea's only approach to the issue of her race. In Excerpt (4.2), Azalea raps the following lines from her song "Goddess":

Excerpt (4.2)

1 Ain't this what y'all need me for
2 You done pissed me off what is y'all leaving for
3 Oh what? A white girl with a flow ain't been seen before
4 Bow down until your knees get sore

These four lines are the opening lines to "Goddess," and, as such, they construct an opposing but not necessarily contradictory identity to the one constructed in "Work." In a blaze of confidence, Azalea constructs this identity for herself as a goddess, someone to whom people should bow down. In lines 1-2, Azalea confronts her audience, asking them why they left (line 2) when she is only fulfilling a need (line 1). When Azalea states, "Ain't this what y'all need me for," the need that she is referring to is most likely the deficit of female rappers. Azalea voices an opinion that has been shared by many female hip-hop artists, which is that the hip-hop community needs more female rappers. Therefore, Azalea sees herself as fulfilling that need. However, the audience to which Azalea directs the song is constructed as unappreciative and critical of what Azalea has done, 'leaving' her when she really needed their support. In lines 3-4, she extends the confrontation, asking the audience why they are leaving. She then offers up an answer to her own question, stating that 'a white girl with a flow ain't been seen before.' Azalea is

stating here that this race and talent combination has not been seen before in the hip-hop community, which may or may not be true. Either way, though, Azalea is asking why people are turning their backs on her when she has not done anything wrong. The final line is commanding, in that she demands that her audience bow down to her until their knees get sore. She wants the respect that she feels she deserves.

In these four lines, Azalea confronts the race issue in a very different manner. She continues to show that she recognizes that her position is not a typical one; however, she does not excuse it this time. Instead, she commands that the audience move past this issue and show her the respect that she feels she deserves. These two methods of responding to the racial dimension show a level of self-awareness on Azalea's part. She realizes that she is perceived as an outsider to many hip-hop community members but refuses to accept that fact, instead challenging the audience to find another reason to criticize her. Whether this will help her to be treated as more authentic or accepted within the hip-hop community remains to be seen.

Political-Economic Dimension: The Consequences of Mainstream Success

Two of the five selected songs from Azalea's album discuss selling out: "Walk the Line" and "Fancy." In "Walk the Line," Azalea attempts to show that she has not forgotten about her origins. In Excerpt (4.3), Azalea raps about issues with a major record company and the large amount or musical artists who sell out:

Excerpt (4.3)

From country living to county skipping, this would drive you crazy
Check the rate that they pay me a giant could never slay me
Money never a maybe but never forgot my roots
I heard that the top is lonely I wonder if it's the truth
So I'm just climbing, paid off rhyming, now I'm shining could be blinding
Ain't too much real left but right here is where you could find it

Line 1 refers to how successful Azalea has become, to the point that she can afford to fly from country to country. The 'you' in line 1 does not appear to refer to anyone specifically; however, it could possibly refer to those who have not supported her in the past or to those who are currently criticizing her. Line 2 continues to discuss Azalea's wealth when she implies that she gets paid at such a high rate – meaning that she is so successful – that a giant could never slay her. The term 'giant' most likely refers to a 'giant' company, most likely her record company, with which she has had multiple issues. Line 2 therefore serves to remind her audience that, while she may have been at the mercy of a record company before, she is now too powerful to be vulnerable to one of them. This is an important point in terms of the political-economic dimension. Artists who are at the mercy of their record companies, who have little control over their careers or who are willing to do whatever it takes to make as much money as possible, are often accused of selling out or being inauthentic according to the political-economic dimension. Azalea is attempting to convince her audience that she is not selling out in line 2.

Azalea continues this theme in line 3, when she admits that she does have and continues to make a lot of money but that she has not forgotten her roots, her roots referring either to her early years as a hip-hop artist in Miami and Atlanta or to Australia, where she grew up. In lines 4 and 5, Azalea raps about making it to the top, meaning she is one of the most successful hip-hop artists at the time. She wants to get to the top; however, she wonders if she will be lonely when she gets there, but that does not stop her. Finally, she critiques those at the top, saying 'Ain't too much real left,' meaning that most of the hip-hop artists at the top are not 'real' or authentic, a common claim levied

against mainstream hip-hop artists. Azalea then tries to claim that, despite the fact that she wants to make it to the top, she will continue to be 'real,' refusing to bend to the pressure of the mainstream music industry. The claims in Excerpt (4.3) are quite strong and show the audience that, despite Azalea's success, she does not want to sell out. Azalea wants to keep her ties to her roots, a perspective which should be viewed favorably by hip-hop community members.

Despite the claim that she will not be consumed or changed by her new status and wealth, in "Fancy," Azalea constructs a different version of herself, which would perhaps not be viewed as favorably by hip-hop community members. In Excerpt (4.4), Azalea discusses money and her status as a rapper:

Excerpt (4.4)

1 Swagger on super, I can't shop at no department
2 better get my money on time, if they not money, decline
3 And swear I meant that there so much that they give that line a rewind
4 So get my money on time, if they not money, decline

'Swagger' in line 1 refers to how Azalea constructs herself. In saying that her 'swagger [is] on super,' she is saying that her presentation is the best, that she has turned it up all the way. Therefore, she cannot shop at a department store because she is too rich and too elite to do so. In line 2, she demands that she get her money on time. When she says 'if they not money,' Azalea is saying that if a person approaches her does not have money, she will refuse to do whatever they ask. This could refer to anyone – men who want to date her, her record company who wants her to make an appearance, or people who want to be friends with her. Either way, Azalea is saying that she will only do something if she gets money in return. She then affirms this claim in line 3, when she says 'swear I meant that.' To make sure that her audience understands, she says she will 'rewind' and repeats

line 2 again (line 4). This is a strong claim on Azalea's part, as it constructs her as mercenary and shallow. However, this construction should be considered within the theme of the song. "Fancy" talks about Azalea living the high life; these four lines pair well with the theme, building on the idea that rich people stay rich by demanding money for everything they do and only associating with other rich people. Therefore, if Azalea is simply trying to, in a sense, tell a story, she may not be commenting directly on her own experiences or sense of self. However, if this song is taken at face-value, meaning that Excerpt (4.4) accurately describes Azalea, then Azalea could be criticized for selling out.

Azalea constructs two versions of herself in "Walk the Line" and "Fancy." In some ways, these constructions seem contradictory, as, in "Walk the Line," Azalea criticizes those who sell out, and then, in "Fancy," she constructs herself as one of those sell-outs. As such, the construction of her persona in "Fancy" is problematic and could leave Azalea open to claims of inauthenticity according to the political-economic dimension, despite the fact that she presents herself as authentic in "Walk the Line."

The Gender-Sexual Dimension: Sex, Sexuality, and the Female Performance

As one of the few successful female rappers, Azalea is careful to construct herself according to the expectations of the hip-hop community regarding gender. As Keyes (2012) discussed, there are four distinct categories of female rappers: Queen Mother, Fly Girl, Sista with Attitude, and Lesbian. Azalea fluently shifts between the Queen Mother, Fly Girl, and Sista with Attitude in three of the five selected songs: "Fancy," "Goddess," and "Lady Patra." In "Fancy," Azalea constructs herself as the Fly Girl, reveling in fashion but also in her sexuality as a woman. In Except (4.5), Azalea constructs herself as a sexual being, overtly flirting with the audience:

Excerpt (4.5)

1 Hot girl, hands off, don't touch that
2 Look at it I bet you wishing you could clutch that
3 It's just the way you like it, huh?
4 You're so good, he's just wishing he could bite it, huh?
5 Never turn down nothing,

In line 1, Azalea constructs herself as a 'hot girl,' telling the audience to keep their hands off of her because she is not to be touched. 'That' at the end of line 1 could refer to any part of Azalea's body. Azalea commands the audience in line 2 to look at her body, saying that they wish that they could touch her. In line 3, she reminds the audience that her body is 'just the way [they] like it,' a very flirtatious remark. This flirtation continues in line 4, when she compliments the audience and alludes to men's desire to bite 'it.' Azalea then constructs herself as loose or a party girl in line 5 when she states that she does not turn down any offers. This flirtatious exchange constructs Azalea as an erotic subject versus an object. Azalea owns and celebrates her sexuality and her body, baiting the audience with her playful remarks. She also reminds the audience that she is up for anything, which helps Azalea complete her construction of the Fly Girl identity.

"Goddess" carries themes of female sexuality throughout the song. As described above, "Goddess" asks the audience to bow down to Azalea's greatness; it constructs Azalea as a Queen Mother. The Queen Mother, according to Keyes (2012), is marked by themes of female empowerment and through self-identification as a queen or priestess. Azalea's self-construction as a goddess is in line with the Queen Mother construction. In the hook (or chorus) of "Goddess," Azalea states: "It ain't no one man can stop us / Bow down to a Goddess." The first line is overtly feminist. Azalea's claim that 'no one man can stop us' not only groups women together but also empowers them against patriarchy.

Following that line with ‘Bow down to a Goddess” constructs Azalea as the leader of ‘us,’ presumably the women fighting against patriarchy. She assumes the role of a goddess, an immortal with power over all mortals. This construction is definitely empowering and helps Azalea distinguish herself from other rappers.

“Lady Patra” is more complicated in terms of how Azalea is depicted as a woman. “Lady Patra” is a tribute to Jamaican DJ Lady Patra and features Jamaican rapper Mavado. Mavado, who raps the last two verses of the song (See Appendix A) constructs Azalea as a woman in need of ‘real man’ with whom to have sex. In Excerpt (4.6), which is rapped by Mavado, Mavado shifts between talking *about* Azalea and talking *to* her, creating a complicated subject/object construction:

Excerpt (4.6)

1 Said she need a real man
2 Oh yes she want a real one
3 So she fuck with a Jamaican
4 Done (haha!)
5 Your body lookin' like a billion dollar
6 The baddest bitch you ever seen
7 The one I want to be my baby mama
8 I fuck her like my enemy

In lines 1-4, Mavado claims that Azalea needs a real man, which is why she is with Mavado. It should be noted that Mavado is not necessarily rapping about the real nature of his relationship with Azalea. Mavado is not claiming that he and Azalea are together in real life; the relationship he is rapping about is confined within the reality of the song. In lines 5-6, Mavado compliments Azalea on her body and for being ‘the baddest bitch.’ He extends this compliment in lines 7-8, stating that he wants her to be his ‘baby mama’ and to ‘fuck her like my enemy,’ which means that he wants a satisfying sexual relationship with her. Mavado consistently refers to Azalea as ‘she’ or ‘her’ except in line 5, when he

compliments her body. This excerpt therefore constructs Azalea as a sexual object, existing through her relationship with Mavado.

These three constructions – the Fly Girl, Queen Mother, and sexual object – construct a versatile gender identity for Azalea. In these three songs, Azalea constructs the "polyphonous, multilayered identity" discussed by Barrett (1999). She revels in her own sexuality and enjoys the praise of men while simultaneously refusing to be controlled by the very men with whom she flirts. This complex identity seems to be viewed positively by members of the hip-hop community, as Azalea maintains positive relationships with men (as will be discussed in the Chapter 5) while upholding her independence as a hip-hop artist.

The Socio-Locational Dimension: The Streets of Australia

Azalea does not pretend to be from the idealized 'streets' that are associated with authenticity according to the socio-locational dimension. Her distinct Australian accent constructs her as a foreigner; therefore, her best hope is to embrace her identity as an Australian, focusing on how, despite the difference in terms of country of origin, she still endured the struggle that is often associated with growing up on 'the streets.' In Excerpt (4.1) from Azalea's song, "Work," Azalea discusses immigrating to America from Australia and how no one here knows about Australia. In this excerpt, Azalea attempts to show that she is embracing her Australian identity, at the same time she criticizes those who assume that, because she came from Australia, she is not authentic according to the socio-locational dimension of authenticity. In this way, Azalea is attempting to make the subtle distinctions discussed by De Fina (2007): Azalea aligns herself with the Australian identity while at the same time reconstructing the Australian identity to line up with the

hip-hop community's expectations regarding the socio-locational dimension. In Excerpt (4.7) from "Walk the Line," Azalea shows that she has distanced herself from this part of her past:

Excerpt (4.7)

1 Not where I wanna be but I'm far from home
2 Just tryna' make it on my own
3 And unless destiny calls I don't answer phones
4 This is the line that I walk alone

In line 1, Azalea raps about being far from home. When she states that she is not where she wants to be, she seems to be referring not to a location but to her lack of mainstream success. Despite her lack of success, she takes pride in the fact that she is far from home, meaning that she is no longer in Australia. She further constructs this distance by stating that she is on her own (line 2) and that she walks alone (line 4). She is distancing herself from her family and from her country of origin in an attempt to show her allegiance to America and to the American hip-hop community. This distance could help Azalea be seen as more authentic in terms of the socio-location dimension. While she is not from the 'right' location, she also does not celebrate where she is from – Australia, a place that, for the most part, does not value hip-hop. Like the racial dimension, the socio-locational dimension is a difficult measure to overcome; however, Azalea is clearly trying to prove that place of origin matters little, as she attempts to align herself with the right community and disalign herself with her community of origin.

The Cultural Dimension: The History and Traditions of Hip-Hop

Azalea attempts to show her knowledge of the history and traditions of the hip-hop community through the references to other artists in her lyrics. In "Work," Azalea makes two references to artists. The first one she makes was discussed earlier in

reference to the racial dimension. When Azalea states “White chick on that Pac shit,” she is referring to Tupac, a famous rapper who was immortalized by the hip-hop community following his murder in 1996. Azalea also makes a second reference in the second verse of “Work,” when she states “Studied the Carters till a deal was offered.” The ‘Carters’ refer to Jay-Z and Lil Wayne, two famous hip-hop artists with the last name Carter.

Azalea also attempts to highlight her cultural knowledge in “Lady Patra.” As a tribute to DJ Lady Patra, Azalea shows her appreciation for the hip-hop artists who came before her. Azalea also makes a reference to The Notorious B.I.G, another famous rapper who was murdered in 1997, in the line “Versaces over eyelids, lookin' like Biggie Poppa.” Azalea here is referring to the fact that The Notorious B.I.G was known for wearing sunglasses, and she herself is wearing Versace sunglasses in this song.

Azalea appears to attempt to prove her cultural authenticity through intertextual references to other hip-hop artists in her songs. Intertextual references are essential to the construction of a culturally authentic hip-hop community member identity as they keep the language of hip-hop grounded in the history of the community (see Bax, 2011 for more information on intertextuality). However, Azalea’s references are for the most part too mainstream to really have any value in terms of granting her authenticity ‘points.’ Besides Lady Patra, Azalea’s references are too modern and too well-known to function as evidence to support her cultural authenticity. While Azalea may have other songs that contain more salient references, from the data at hand, Azalea has yet to prove that she has deep knowledge of hip-hop history and culture. This claim is supported by Wilkins (2015), who states that Azalea “has little knowledge of or interest in hip-hop’s dynamic history” (para. 7). Based on the level of cultural knowledge that Azalea has shown in

these lyrics, combined with Wilkins' (2015) conclusion, Azalea may not be interested and/or capable of proving her authenticity according to this dimension (see Chapter Seven for further discussion).

Linguistic Authenticity: Linguistic Appropriation and AAS

As will be discussed in relation to Excerpt (5.3) in Chapter 5, Azalea raps with a distinctly down-south accent. This alone has caused significant criticism regarding Azalea's linguistic authenticity, as an Australian-born girl who moved to the United States at 16 could not have acquired that accent naturally. Given this fact, her performance could be viewed as crossing – where a speaker picks a linguistic code that is not his/her own but does not have the competence to be classified as an authentic speaker (see Sweetland, 2002 or Guy & Cutler, 2011). This criticism, in many ways, cannot be argued against, as Azalea admits that she intentionally picked up and continues to use the accent to sound cooler (see Excerpt [5.3] in Chapter 5), a contentious claim on its own, as it indicates that Azalea sees this accent as a commodity, something to be picked up at will and used in an attempt to sound 'cool' or to further her career. This is further complicated by the skill with which Azalea mimics the down-south accent. According to Cooper (2014),

> [T]his Australian born-and-raised white girl almost convincingly mimics the sonic register of a downhome Atlanta girl. The question is why? Why is her mimicry of sonic Blackness okay? Though rap music is a Black and Brown art form, one does not need to mimic Blackness to be good at it. Ask the Beastie Boys, or Eminem, or Macklemore. These are just a smattering of the white men who've been successful in rap in the last 30 years and generally they don't have to appropriate Blackness to do it. (para. 4-5)

As Cooper (2014) articulates, to be successful in hip-hop, one does not have to use HHNL. In fact, as discussed in relation to Macklemore's linguistic authenticity below,

Macklemore retains his native Seattle accent and use of Standard American English, even when rapping. It is therefore difficult to theorize why Azalea continues to use this accent despite extensive criticism from fellow artists, journalists, and critics.

In terms of AAS, like her use of the down-south accent, Azalea has successfully appropriated numerous terms that help to establish her connection with the hip-hop community. Terms such as 'swagger' (Excerpt [4.4]) and 'flow' (Excerpt [4.2]), as well as her consistent use of 'ain't' for negation, show that Azalea has at least been listening to the language of fellow hip-hop artists if nothing else. As Cooper (2014) remarked, however, it is not that Azalea is not successfully constructing herself as a hip-hop artist, as she convincingly mimics the accent and has blended numerous AAS terms into her performance. The issue that many have with Azalea is that her performance is *too* convincing; she could easily pass for an authentic hip-hop artist to the untrained eye/ear. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter Seven.

Macklemore and Ryan Lewis' *The Heist*

The deluxe edition of Macklemore and Ryan Lewis' first album includes 17 songs and 12 featured artists. *The Heist* is a blend of upbeat, frivolous songs and serious, often critical songs, featuring themes of overcoming drug abuse, riding high on life, and being politically active. As discussed earlier, Macklemore is not the only name credited on this album. His producer, Ryan Lewis, shares credit for the production and release of *The Heist*; however, in terms of the lyrics, the focus of this discussion, Lewis will not be discussed as he was the producer and therefore did not participate linguistically in the performance of the songs selected for analysis. The five songs designated for analysis were chosen based on how the lyrics to these songs overtly relate to McLeod's semantic

dimensions of authenticity. Table 4.2 shows an overview of the themes and semantic dimensions that are featured in each of the selected songs.

Table 4.2: Themes and dimensions of authenticity in Macklemore's lyrics

Song	Themes	McLeod's Dimension(s)
Ten Thousand Hours	Dedication to hip-hop, the American education system, political activism, drug abuse	Political-economic, socio-psychological
Can't Hold Us	Style, independence (from mainstream record labels)	Gender-sexual, political-economic, socio-psychological, cultural
Make the Money	Political activism, struggle to make a difference, not selling out	Political-economic
A Wake	Age, drugs, racial dichotomy	Gender-sexual, racial, socio-psychological, cultural
Victory Lap	Reaching mainstream success, remembering his life before success	Socio-psychological, socio-locational

The following analysis features excerpts from each of the songs to illustrate how Macklemore constructs himself according to McLeod's semantic dimensions of authenticity. The full lyrics for each song are located in Appendix B.

The Socio-Psychological Dimension: A Sense of Self

Macklemore often speaks honestly in his songs, weaving in lyrics about his history with drug abuse and his struggle to receive recognition in the hip-hop industry. Four of the five songs selected discuss Macklemore's personal life: "Ten Thousand Hours," "Can't Hold Us," "A Wake," and "Victory Lap." In "Ten Thousand Hours," Macklemore discusses Malcolm Gladwell's belief that success in any activity can be

achieved if an individual devotes 10,000 hours to mastering the activity. In Excerpt (4.8), Macklemore describes his first moments in the spotlight:

Excerpt (4.8)

1 Got an iTunes check, shit man I'm paying rent
2 About damn time that I got out of my basement
3 About damn time I got around the country and I hit these stages
4 I was made to slay them
5 Ten thousand hours I'm so damn close I can taste it
6 On some Malcolm Gladwell, David Bowie meets Kanye shit
7 This is dedication
8 A life lived for art is never a life wasted
9 Ten thousand

Lines 1-2 describe how Macklemore was finally able to pay rent and leave his basement once he started receiving revenue checks from iTunes. This success allowed him to tour the country and play for real audiences. In line 5, Macklemore describes the sensation of being so close to the success that Gladwell promised. In line 6, Macklemore describes himself as a combination of Gladwell, who shows dedication, Bowie, who shows musical skill, and Kayne West, who shows rap ability. He sums up the verse in lines 7-9, emphasizing that he is dedicated to hip-hop and to his own success, stating that a life dedicated to an art is not a life wasted. In this excerpt, Macklemore does not focus on the money or fame associated with success. Instead, he focuses on how his success has enabled him to show the country his art, an aspiration that is highly valued by hip-hop community members and is linked with the political-economic dimension of authenticity.

In “Can’t Hold Us,” Macklemore talks about his earliest years in hip-hop, when he was fourteen and had to travel around the city to make his music. In Excerpt (4.9), Macklemore combines two lines of personal anecdote with two lines about his present relationship with the music industry:

Excerpt (4.9)

1 Chasing dreams since I was fourteen with the four track bussing
2 Halfway cross that city with the backpack
3 Fat cat, crushing labels out here, now they can't tell me nothing
4 We give that to the people, spread it across the country

In lines 1-2, Macklemore describes himself as chasing his dream to be a successful hip-hop artist, a dream that started at age fourteen, when he used to take his four track (a type of recorder) in his backpack on the bus with him as he went halfway across Seattle (where he was raised) to collaborate with other musicians. In line 3, Macklemore describes the major music labels as 'fat cats' (greedy, self-serving businessmen), stating that he himself is crushing them because he is achieving success independently. 'We' in line 4 most likely refers to Macklemore and Lewis, who are giving the music (and the profits associated with it) back to the people instead of giving everything to the major music label. In this excerpt, Macklemore is again trying to prove to his audience that he has put forth the effort to deserve the success that he has achieved and that he will not waste that success by selling out to a music label.

Macklemore does not pretend to be all good, however. In fact, he embraces the darker aspects of his past in "A Wake," where he raps "I used to drink away my paycheck / Celebrate the mistakes I hadn't made yet," and in "Victory Lap," where he raps "I remember the days with nothing but a bus pass / I was just a little shorty just hoping that I could find a bum to buy a 40 for me / And have enough for a bud sack." These lines from "A Wake" refer to Macklemore's issues with alcoholism early in his career, how he got caught up in the fast-paced yet harmful lifestyle sometimes associated with the hip-hop community. In "Victory Lap," he goes back even further to when he was a 'little shorty,' meaning a little kid, and he would try to find someone to buy him a '40,' meaning

alcohol, while still saving enough of his money to buy a ‘bud sack,’ which refers to marijuana. By freely admitting his past mistakes, Macklemore helps the audience to see him as more than just a white, wannabe rapper (see Chapter Six). Like other members of the hip-hop community, Macklemore has struggled and fought for the success that he has now achieved, and it shows in his lyrics. He presents a self in his music that seems to be honest, and his experiences are not unlike those of other members of the community, which helps him to establish common ground.

The Racial Dimension: Confronting White Privilege

Macklemore consistently addresses the privilege that has been afforded to him because of his status as a white male. In “A Wake,” Macklemore grapples with this issue, explaining to his audience how his presence in hip-hop has led him to think deeply about issues of race within and outside of the hip-hop community:

Excerpt (4.10)

1 And my subconscious telling me stop it
2 This is an issue that you shouldn't get involved in
3 Don't even tweet, R.I.P Trayvon Martin
4 Don't wanna be that white dude, million man marchin'
5 Fighting for our freedom that my people stole
6 Don't wanna make all my white fans uncomfortable
7 But you don't even have a fuckin' song for radio
8 Why you out here talkin race, tryin' to save the fuckin' globe
9 Don't get involved if the cause isn’t mine
10 White privilege, white guilt, at the same damn time
11 So we just party like it's nineteen ninety nine
12 Celebrate the ignorance while these kids keep dying

Line 1 indicates that this is an internal struggle for Macklemore. He feels like he should not get involved with racial politics, not even tweet a response to the shooting death of black teenager Trayvon Martin, because he does not want to be seen as one of the white faces in a struggle with strong racial overtones. In line 5, he states that it would seem

absurd, despite his personal feelings, to fight for freedoms that his ancestors had stolen from black Americans. He extends this argument in line 6 with a salient point: his fan base is predominantly white; by openly discussing racial politics in his music, Macklemore risks alienating potential non-white fans. Macklemore then shifts outside of himself in lines 7-9, describing how people would criticize him if he were to speak about race, stating that he should not get involved with a cause that does not directly involve him. Finally, in lines 10-12, Macklemore describes how he is caught between the benefits of white privilege and the guilt over those benefits, which results in inaction and a celebration of ignorance. He extends this criticism to all people who are faced with the same dilemma through the use of 'we.' In line 12, he shows the consequences of this ignorance, which is that kids like Trayvon Martin will continue to die.

Macklemore has obviously given the issue of race a lot of thought. He clearly struggles with the privileges he has been afforded because of his race, especially within the context of the predominantly black hip-hop community. Although, according to McLeod, Macklemore cannot be seen as authentic according to the racial dimension, this personal confrontation shows that Macklemore is aware of his position and is therefore addressing the inaction that originally led to this racial dichotomy. In this way, Macklemore aligns himself with the issues and concerns that are shared by many members of the hip-hop community. Macklemore indexes a racially conscious identity, in which he attempts to reconcile his outsider status with both the privileges and consequences that this status has afforded him within the community.

The Political-Economic Dimension: Change over Financial Success

Macklemore's decision to not sign on with a mainstream music label is one way he has shown that he is not a sell-out. Macklemore also shows his dedication to his music, his fans, and to change in three of the five selected songs. As discussed earlier, in Excerpt (4.8) from "Ten Thousand Hours," Macklemore sees his dedication and the ability to play for audiences across the country as the measure of success, rather than the amount of money he makes. Later in the song, in Excerpt (4.11), Macklemore discusses how this dedication leads to an uncomfortable struggle that must be consistently endured as an artist crafts his/her album:

Excerpt (4.11)

1 Nothing beautiful about it, no light at the tunnel
2 For the people that put the passion before them being comfortable
3 Raw, unmedicated heart, no substitute
4 Banging on table tops, no substitute […]
5 My only rehabilitation was the sweat, tears and blood when up in the booth

Macklemore groups himself with the 'people' in line 2, people who put their passion before being comfortable. 'Comfortable' could refer to financial comfort or the comfort related to the ignorance discussed in relation to Excerpt (4.10). Either way, Macklemore puts his passion for hip-hop ahead of any form of comfort. Macklemore states that there is no substitute for the raw, unmedicated heart that he puts into the music, for the simple sounds like banging on table tops. The verse ends with line 5, in which Macklemore states that his only rehabilitation (for his alcoholism and drug abuse) is the effort and dedication he puts into his music when he is in the booth (at the studio). Through this excerpt, Macklemore proves that his career is not about fame or financial success but is instead about the struggle to produce great music and stay sober.

Similarly, in Excerpt (4.9) from “Can’t Hold Us,” Macklemore raps about crushing the big music labels and giving the music back to the people instead. In Excerpt (4.12), from “Make the Money,” Macklemore argues that this is who he is and the money does not matter:

Excerpt (4.12)

That's just the work, regardless of who's listening, listening
Listen, see I was meant to be a warrior
Fight something amongst me, leave here victorious
Classroom of kids, or a venue performing
If I'd done it for the money I'd have been a fucking lawyer

Macklemore argues that this struggle is just part of the job and that, as a warrior, he will eventually be victorious and be successful as a hip-hop artist. In lines 4-5, Macklemore states that whether he is in a classroom full of kids or in a performance venue, he would rather be performing than be in any other profession. If he had wanted to earn money, he would have picked another profession. Macklemore presents himself through these songs as someone who did not become a hip-hop artist in order to become rich and famous. He is instead dedicated to the art and to expressing himself, sentiments that could help him to be seen as authentic according to the political-economic dimension. However, his mainstream success following the release of “Thrift Shop” has caused the hip-hop community to doubt Macklemore’s dedication to the art despite the sentiments that he expresses in his songs, as will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

The Gender-Sexual Dimension: Masculine Heteronormativity

One of the most controversial hip-hop songs to be released in 2012 was Macklemore’s “Same Love,” which champions gay rights. However, this song was not included in this sample, as it is discussed at length during Macklemore’s interview with

The Breakfast Club (Excerpt 5.10) in Chapter 5 and in the discussion of YouTube commentary in response to the song (Excerpt 6.11) in Chapter 6. However, two other songs from this sample discuss gender construction: “Can’t Hold Us” and “A Wake.” In “Can’t Hold Us,” Macklemore constructs himself as masculine and heteronormative, the epitome of normality according to the hip-hop community. The song is about being confident, about others (either the hip-hop community as a whole or perhaps mainstream music labels) being unable to hold ‘us’ (Macklemore and Lewis) back. In “Can’t Hold Us,” Macklemore states “Get up! Fresh out, pimp strut walking, little bit of humble, little bit of cautious / Somewhere between like Rocky and Cosby. Sweater gang, nope, nope y’all can’t copy.” Macklemore’s pimp strut, a cocky and jovial walk, has a touch of humility and cautiousness. He places himself somewhere between Rocky, known for his determination, and Cosby, known for his humor. Macklemore puts the three of them together in a ‘sweater gang,’ as all are known for wearing sweaters, and tells the audience that they cannot copy the gang’s style. In the chorus, sung by Ray Dalton, Dalton sings “Tonight is the night, we’ll fight 'til it’s over / So we put our hands up like the ceiling can’t hold us.” These lines also echo Macklemore’s performed mentality, in which he will fight for the success he feels he deserves. Macklemore, Lewis, and Dalton put their hands up because they feel they are so big that the ceiling might not be strong enough to contain them. These two excerpts construct Macklemore in a very typical manner in terms of gender construction within the hip-hop community. He displays a level of bravado and cockiness in this song that helps him to construct himself as a typical male hip-hop artist.

However, in “A Wake,” he subtly critiques the hip-hop community and his audience in general for not using condoms. He raps “Our generation isn't the best on safe sex / We forget the latex, becoming Planned Parenthood patients.” Macklemore is saying that people are not using condoms as often as they should and therefore become patients at Planned Parenthood, either because they are pregnant or because they have contracted a sexually transmitted disease. This subtle critique, while not as threatening or controversial as “Same Love,” does not help Macklemore conform to the typical masculine construction that exists within the hip-hop community, as the community is not known for its promotion of safe sex. Macklemore therefore creates two contrasting versions of himself. In terms of his masculinity, Macklemore wants to advertise the confidence and bravado that is associated with hip-hop masculinity. However, when it comes to sexuality and the sexual act itself, Macklemore does not necessarily want to be constructed as normative. Instead, he critiques the system that hip-hop has constructed, in which non-heteronormative sexuality and safe sex are issues that are rarely discussed.

The Socio-Locational Dimension: The Suburbs of Seattle

Macklemore cannot deny that he is from the suburbs of Seattle, Washington, which means that he cannot be considered authentic according to the socio-locational dimension, which, as discussed above, requires that a hip-hop artist come from the ‘streets’ to be considered authentic. Despite this, however, Macklemore shows passion and dedication to his hometown, which is viewed both positively and negatively by members of the hip-hop community (see Excerpt [6.14] in Chapter 6). In Excerpt (4.13), from “Victory Lap,” Macklemore discusses his dedication, which also goes back to the political-economic dimension:

Excerpt (4.13)

1 But I got creative control and my soul's mine
2 I wouldn't trade it, maybe I'm crazy
3 I put on for my city
4 Seattle that raised me

In this excerpt, Macklemore shows that part of this creative control, of being independent, is being able to show Seattle what he has accomplished, to put a show on for them and allow them to also benefit from his success. Macklemore has consistently returned to Seattle since achieving mainstream success, which shows the hip-hop community that he has not forgotten about his roots, even if those roots are atypical for a potential community member. In Excerpt (4.14), the hook of "Victory Lap," Macklemore raps:

Excerpt (4.14)

1 And they say, "Don't forget where you come from
2 Don't die holding on to your words
3 Cause you know you got a whole world to change
4 But understand who you got to change first"

Macklemore is reminding himself and the audience that people should remember and value the place from which they came, should speak what is on their minds instead of staying silent, and should remember that one must change oneself before one can change the world. Macklemore is again paying homage to Seattle in these lines. While Macklemore cannot change the fact that he is not from the 'street,' his Seattle pride and his dedication to paying the city back for all that it gave him constructs Macklemore as an individual who is proud of his roots. Whether the hip-hop community will similarly value Macklemore's heritage is yet to be seen.

The Cultural Dimension: Respecting Tradition

Like Azalea, Macklemore attempts to show his knowledge of the history and traditions of hip-hop by making intertextual references to artists within his songs. Two of the five selected songs from *The Heist* feature cultural references: "Can't Hold Us," and "A Wake." In Excerpt (4.15), from "Can't Hold Us," Macklemore talks about one of the groups that influenced him the most:

Excerpt (4.15)

1 Yeah I'm so damn grateful.
2 I grew up, really wanted gold fronts
3 But that's what you get when Wu-Tang raised you
4 Y'all can't stop me, go hard like I got an 808 in my heart beat

Macklemore starts this verse by stating that he is grateful for hip-hop's heritage. When he was growing up, he wanted 'gold fronts,' removable or permanent gold caps for one's front teeth, because he loved 'Wu-Tang,' which refers to Wu-Tang Clan, one of the most influential hip-hop groups from Macklemore's era. In line 4, Macklemore states that he is working hard like he has an '808' in his heart beat. '808' refers to the Roland TR-808 Rhythm Composer, which was introduced in 1980 and aided in the rise of hip-hop. These four lines indicate not only that Macklemore has been involved in hip-hop culture since an early age but also that he was inspired by the trends and the groups of an earlier era.

In Excerpt (4.16), from "A Wake," Macklemore connects his passion for hip-hop to the race and class struggle often associated with hip-hop:

Excerpt (4.16)

1 I grew up during Reaganomics
2 When Ice T was out there on his killing cops shit
3 Or Rodney King was getting beat on
4 And they let off every single officer
5 And Los Angeles went and lost it
6 Now every month there is a new Rodney on YouTube
7 It's just something our generation is used to

These lines, which precede Excerpt (4.10), indicate that Macklemore not only has knowledge of the musical history of hip-hop but of the cultural history as well. His references to Ice T, a famous rapper who rapped about killing cops, Rodney King, a black civilian who was beaten by cops during riots in Los Angeles in 1991, and to cases similar to King's that happen every day, are used to show that Macklemore is invested in more than just the music of the hip-hop culture. This references are a way for Macklemore to show his alignment with the culture, history, and values of the hip-hop community. Excerpts (4.10) and (4.16) help Macklemore to construct an identity as an invested community member who aligns himself with the problems and issues that concern the hip-hop community as a whole.

Linguistic Authenticity: Authenticity without Appropriation

Like Azalea, Macklemore does not use HHNL, although he does incorporate elements of AAS. Unlike Azalea, however, Macklemore does not appear to be using an accent other than his native accent when rapping. As Cutler (2003) noted, artists who feel secure in terms of their position in hip-hop often do not signal their identity as a community member in linguistically overt ways. These artists are also candid about issues of race and class. This description neatly aligns with Macklemore's identity construction through his lyrics. His decision to not appropriate HHNL, despite his decades of exposure to it, could indicate that Macklemore feels secure in his right to be a hip-hop artist and community member. Also, as discussed above, Macklemore openly talks about issues of privilege, in terms of both race and class, which could also be indicative of his sense of security within at least part of the hip-hop community. Macklemore does, however, use numerous terms associated with AAS, such as 'gold

fronts' and the '808' from "Can't Hold Us," although his use of AAS is more prevalent in other songs from *The Heist*, such as "Thrift Shop" and "White Walls," where he uses phrases such as 'honkey,' 'tight,' and 'tints.'

Despite this performed sense of security, however, Macklemore's consistent use of Standard American English (SAE), could be seen as problematic by many members of the hip-hop community at large. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, because Macklemore does not 'sound Black,' his performance is sometimes labeled as 'spoken poetry' or 'not rap' by YouTube commenters. It seems that despite Cutler's claim that Macklemore does not necessarily need HHNL, the larger hip-hop community may disagree. On some level, the use of HHNL goes back to cultural knowledge of hip-hop, which means that, despite accusations of appropriation, Azalea could perhaps be seen as more authentic, as she at least sounds more like a member of the hip-hop community. This conclusion is in line with Kilson (2015), who noted that "[u]nlike, say, Eminem or any number of white performers, Azalea makes a clear effort to sound distinctly black in her accent and intonation" (para. 2). Cooper (2014) made similar claims. Despite the problematic nature of Azalea's performance, her efforts to linguistically assimilate have allowed her to become part of the hip-hop conversation in a way that Macklemore's linguistic performance has not.

Discussion

Azalea and Macklemore attempt to show their right to be perceived as authentic performers in the hip-hop community in various and contrasting ways. Through their song lyrics, both artists attempt to construct themselves as members of the hip-hop community. Azalea constructs herself as hard-working and driven, dedicated to rapping

about her own experiences. She does not deny that her position as a white, female rapper is uncommon, but she also does not excuse the audience's discrimination against her because of her race and/or gender. She argues that she is not at the mercy of a record label because of how successful she has become and that she is more real than other mainstream artists who have achieved similar success. Her sexual identity is fluid, transitioning from the Fly Girl to the Queen Mother to the sexual object with ease. She does not deny her Australian identity but also distances herself from it in attempt to show allegiance to her American hip-hop community. However, her dual careers (hip-hop and modeling) have caused both communities to question her dedication, and she has yet to invest in acquiring the cultural knowledge of hip-hop that would help her to be seen as more authentic. Finally, her appropriated accent has caused many community members to question her position in the community, specifically whether she wants to be a 'real' member or just sees hip-hop as a commodity that she can sell.

Meanwhile, Macklemore constructs himself as an artist who is dedicated to his craft and to sharing his music with the people. Macklemore does not pretend to be perfect, describing personal battles such as overcoming drug abuse in his songs. Macklemore is also hyper-aware of his white privilege, arguing openly with himself about the consequences of being a white artist in a racially-charged community. Macklemore connects success with personal expression rather than money. In terms of gender construction, Macklemore attempts to construct himself as a typical male community member. He also demonstrates his familiarity with the heritage of the community, as he raps about the musical traditions as well as the political history that has fueled the community. However, Macklemore speaks openly about his white guilt, which

has led to accusations of hypocrisy because Macklemore is benefiting from the very thing he is criticizing. Macklemore also does not necessarily present a heteronormative identity, as he raps about gender and sexual issues (gay rights and safe sex) that are often considered off-limits by many community members. Macklemore's passion for his hometown of Seattle could be seen as positive, as he embraces the community that raised him; however, it is also not the 'streets' that are regarded as the location necessary for constructing the most authentic hip-hop artist identity. Finally, Macklemore speaks SAE, which could be seen as both positive and negative. Macklemore is staying true to himself by not appropriating HHNL, yet his linguistic performance also distances him from much of the community who, for the most part, embrace HHNL as an essential element of the hip-hop identity.

Azalea and Macklemore both conform and challenge the semantic dimensions of authenticity in their lyrics. These constructions, however, are one-sided. As discussed by Ciepiela (2001), identity is only constructed in the presence of others. Azalea's and Macklemore's lyrics represent singular utterances that much receive a response of some sort in order to be true attempts at identity construction. Hip-hop community members must affirm or critique Azalea's and Macklemore's attempts to construct themselves as authentic members of the hip-hop community in order for these constructions to have any validity. Such responses are seen in the interviews and in the YouTube commentary in response to their music videos.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Introduction

Interviews provide an indispensable way of studying the identity constructions of Iggy Azalea and Macklemore because, within the interviews, the artists attempt to construct themselves in specific ways in order to achieve their goals. The interviews are structured around the interviewers' questions, forcing the artists to give in-the-moment responses to topics that they might otherwise have not discussed. This level of intrusion is coupled with the artists' attempts to shape their audiences' perceptions of them as musical artists, as members of the hip-hop community, and as human beings. The power within the interviews is not always balanced. Depending on whether the interview questions were agreed upon prior to the interview, the interviewers may have significant control in terms of how the artists are constructed. The interviewers often ask what seem to be uncomfortable questions, forcing the artists to use a number of linguistic tactics, such as avoidance and hedging, to maneuver through the conversation without losing face. The artists must carefully shape their responses to fit the identities that they are attempting to construct within the interviews. This nature of this identity work (see De Fina, 2007) means that even one off-color comment or dispreferred response could result in a less-than-ideal identity construction for the artists. This careful (or in some cases, less than careful) exercise of linguistic maneuvers is analyzed in two instances for each artist, as Azalea and Macklemore each speak to interviewers at two radio stations: Hot 97

and The Breakfast Club. Through these interviews, the artists attempt to claim member status in the hip-hop community in different ways, creating unique identity constructions in each interview that not only show maturation on the artists' parts but an intriguing evolution of their statuses within the hip-hop community.

Iggy Azalea's Interview with Hot 97

Hot 97's interview with Iggy Azalea occurred in June 2013. When it was published on YouTube, it was titled "Ebro asks Iggy Azalea if she's an imposter," which indicates that Ebro would be discussing issues of (in)authenticity with Azalea. Five people participated in this interview: three interviewers from the radio station Hot 97 – Ebro, Cipha Sounds, and K. Foxx – and Azalea and T.I., a well-known southern rapper with whom Azalea has worked closely since 2012. While it is not uncommon for multiple interviewers to participate in interviews on Hot 97, T.I.'s decision to accompany Azalea and at times direct the conversation indicate a relationship in which the power dynamic is unbalanced. This is evident in the first three and half minutes, during which questions are directed solely towards T.I., and Azalea is discussed in the third person, effectively relegating her to the position of an object. For instance, in Excerpt (5.1), Ebro directs the following statement to T.I.:

Excerpt (5.1)

Ebro (1:24): I brought up Iggy Azalea in that conversation and the conversation that when I kinda saw her making the videos and it was this tall hot blonde making rap music I was like okay, I didn't really know much about her. And then I met her. Really nice young lady. T.I. signs her and then I hear some controversy comes out about a line in a song. I never actually heard the song but something about referencing she's like a runaway slave.

This statement, which indirectly asks T.I. about the controversy involving that line, refers to Azalea using third-person pronouns (she/her) but also as 'this tall hot blonde' and

'really nice young lady.' These references, combined with the indirect nature of the conversation, position Azalea as a sexualized yet young and naïve woman in need of a man to speak for her. This identity is perpetuated throughout the interview, as T.I. consistently shapes the conversation, shutting down subjects that he deems inappropriate and redirecting the interviewers when necessary. In this role, T.I. creates an identity for himself as the strong male who must protect his protégé from saying the wrong thing. This is evident in his use of phrases such as "if I may step in" (1:51) and "after speaking to the young lady" (2:10). This gender identity construction is common in hip-hop, where female artists are often only able to achieve success if they are promoted by a male artist. As Lucas (2006) notes "In most cases, it is difficult for a female rapper to be successful unless she is part of a well-known, male-dominated clique" (p. 6). For Azalea, her success is contingent to a large degree on her relationship with T.I.

T.I., however, cannot control the conversation completely, as Ebro soon calls him out, stating, "T.I. trying to cover for her right cause he's the head honcho" (3:29), to which Azalea asks, "You want me to talk about it?" (3:38), referring again to the controversy regarding a line in Azalea's song. Ebro's statement affirms T.I.'s power over Azalea while simultaneously indirectly calling him out for speaking for Azalea. Azalea also affirms T.I.'s power over her with the statement, "You know T.I., he's my family, so he has to feel like he has to cover for me, it's his duty" (3:45). This statement constructs traditional gender roles for both T.I. and Azalea and rebuffs Ebro for calling T.I. out. Azalea's response is also the first time that she plays an active role in the conversation. Prior to this statement, she had made a few side-comments; however, they were not acknowledged by the other participants in the conversation. This exchange opens the

floor up to the main reason for the interview (which was hinted at in the title): to discuss Azalea's position as a white rapper in the hip-hop community.

There are four topics of interest in this interview: Azalea's use of the phrase "runaway slave," her accent, her position in hip-hop, and her dating preferences/sex life. The "runaway slave" exchange lasts approximately five minutes. According to Azalea, the line that started the controversy was part of a song by rapper Kendrick Lamar that she was remixing. Azalea defends her actions by positioning herself as an impressionable new rapper who was persuaded by (black) men in her studio to use that line. In Excerpt (5.2), she states:

Excerpt (5.2)

1 Azalea (4:04): When I wrote it, and I was in a room full of … *black guys* umm I
2 Ebro: [black dudes. Say it.
3 Go ahead, say it.
4 Azalea: was like I don't know, do you think I can really do this line? I questioned
5 it when I did it and everyone was like no do it, do it, like do it. It's cool, do it, do
6 it, and I did it like an idiot and then after it never really sat right with me. […] It
7 was very tasteless and it was very tacky of me to do that, and it was young of me
8 to do that.

What is perhaps most noticeable about this statement is Azalea's emphasis of, yet hesitancy to use, the statement 'black guys.' Because of her position as the only white woman in the room and one of the few white women in hip-hop, Azalea recognizes that she must be careful with her language. She cannot pretend to be ignorant of the racial tension at play; however, she must also maintain the identity of someone who belongs in the community. The term 'black guys,' however, also constructs a particular picture of the situation for the audience. Azalea relies on the expertise of these 'black guys' because of their status as black guys; to her, their race inherently makes them knowledgeable about hip-hop. This statement also positions Azalea again as the naïve, young woman in

need of guidance. Through her construction of herself in this way, she takes responsibility for her actions while simultaneously shifting the blame onto her younger self (someone who she implies no longer exists).

The conversation then shifts to a discussion of Azalea's accent when she's rapping, which Ebro says sounds like a "down-south accent" and K. Foxx describes as sounding like Azalea is from "somewhere in the A." "A" here refers Atlanta, Georgia, where Azalea established her hip-hop career with T.I. In Excerpt (5.3), when asked about her accent, Azalea responded:

Excerpt (5.3)

Azalea (6:48): I came and moved over here to the south and it's how I would hear people rap and although obviously can hear me talking that I don't have a southern accent but when I would be rapping with people and I would do it that way that's the way that they would just think it was cooler and so I would think it was cooler to do it that way too […] I feel like if other artists can play around with accents is it really does it really hurt anybody?

Through this turn, Azalea attempts to position herself as a performer who developed an accent based on the community she was participating in when she was first establishing herself as a rapper. However, her use of the phrases 'cool' and 'playing around' indicate that Azalea sees her use of HHNL/southern accent as a performance tool instead of an aspect of her identity, a violation of both McLeod's cultural dimension of authenticity, which requires a community member to see hip-hop as more than a commodity, and the linguistic dimension of authenticity, which Guy and Cutler (2011) states requires proper access and sufficient exposure to the speech style. Azalea seems to construct her linguistic performance based on what Bucholtz and Hall (2005) term "the interactional demands of the immediate social context" (p. 591). When Azalea was originally developing her identity as a hip-hop artist, her immediate social context encouraged

specific linguistic choices; she simply was meeting the demand. Since these choices have also led to her success, Azalea does not see a reason to change. She also justifies this position by referencing ‘other artists’ who do the same; however, her question ‘does it really hurt anybody?’ might indicate that she is aware of claims that she has stolen/appropriated an aspect of identity to which she has no claim.

Azalea’s ‘accent as a performance’ argument is supported by Ebro and T.I., who bring up other examples of artists who use accents that aren’t their own in their performances (such as Nicki Minaj and Amy Winehouse). However, it also allows Ebro to raise a critical question. The following exchange occurs in Excerpt (5.4):

Excerpt (5.4)

Ebro (7:55): So if they were to say you’re an imposter, your response?
Azalea: I guess I am an imposter. I am from Australia, right, so maybe I am (laughs)
T.I.: Nah, we don’t do those, we don’t do those. She’s certified.
Azalea: You know what I mean, but what’s an imposter? […]
Ebro: One thing I tell you about Hustle Gang though is you guys know how to make some money, and a six foot blonde rapping is already ringing the cash register. So whether it's a gimmick or a character, it looks like it's going to work.

Azalea’s statement that she is an imposter is followed by laughter on her part; however, the other four participants are not amused by her self-deprecating claim, which is perhaps why T.I. immediately chimes in with the claim ‘she’s certified,’ meaning that she is not an imposter. Azalea’s attempt at humor could be the result of the media hype surrounding her (in)authenticity. What is perhaps most intriguing about this exchange, however, is not that Azalea admits she is an imposter (whether she means it or not) or that T.I. defends her; it is Ebro’s commentary, in which he indirectly accuses the Hustle Gang (which refers to Grand Hustle Records, T.I.’s record label) of supporting Azalea for the profit associated with her success. Within this commentary, Ebro creates a dichotomy regarding

Azalea's (in)authenticity. When he questions whether "it's a gimmick or a character," he leaves no room for Azalea's performance to be seen as authentic, instead implying two things: that Azalea is only in the business of hip-hop for the money and, similarly, that T.I. will support whatever makes a profit, even if it means supporting an inauthentic artist. These are harsh claims considering that, if true, they would mean that Azalea and T.I. are violating McLeod's socio-psychological dimension and the political-economic dimension.

Following this exchange, conversation turns to a discussion of Azalea's latest music video, in which, as K. Foxx brings up, Azalea has a line in which she states "No money, no family. 16 in the middle of Miami." K. Foxx first asks if that line is true, which Azalea confirms it is. In Excerpt (5.5), the following exchange then occurs:

Excerpt (5.5)

K. Foxx (14:32): So what were you doing at 16 in Miami?
Azalea: In Miami? I lived with a friend for about six months and then I moved in with a boyfriend as you did.
Ebro: Black guy? White guy?
Azalea: A black guy. You just want to know. […]
K. Foxx: So is that your preference?
Azalea: Umm no that's not my preference. I have a major crush on Brad Pitt. If he was single I would totally try to do him too.
T.I.: Rich white guys…
Ebro: …and black dudes…
K. Foxx: …and hood black guys.
Azalea: That's my preference?
Ebro: You can't just go 'I have a thing for Brad Pitt,' who doesn't?

K. Foxx and Ebro's preoccupation with the race of Azalea's boyfriend(s) ties back to Azalea's position as a white woman in a predominantly black community. The fact that she had a black boyfriend could be seen as both positive and negative by the audience. On the one hand, the fact that she had a black boyfriend could be evidence to support her

position in the community. It could negate claims of racism (which will be discussed in the section on YouTube commentary) and indicate that Azalea is accepted (at least by her boyfriend if no one else). On the other hand, the act of dating a black man could be seen as overcompensation or even a fetish. Claims could be made that she dated him simply to prove that she is part of the community, or, even worse, that she dated him *because* he was black and therefore fit neatly into her idealized experience of hip-hop culture, which she had dreamed about since she was a young girl in Australia. The speculation surrounding the meaning behind Azalea having a black boyfriend leads to K. Foxx directly asking Azalea about her preference in terms of race when choosing a romantic partner. Azalea diplomatically tries to avoid the question by discussing her (practically clichéd) crush on Brad Pitt. However, T.I., Ebro, and K. Foxx call her out, making the whole situation worse by classifying Azalea's preference in men as "rich white guys, black dudes, and hood black guys." Ebro then takes it a step further by calling Azalea out on her clichéd crush, demanding that she give an honest answer to K. Foxx's original question.

This racially-charged and unforgiving nature of this exchange reminds the audience that, despite Azalea's financial success, the hip-hop community still has a lot of questions for her regarding her position as a community member and, until she adequately answers those questions, she will be consistently interrogated. Azalea ends up describing her preference for charismatic men who are good with words, which seems to satisfy the interviewers, who subsequently move on.

Iggy Azalea's Interview with The Breakfast Club

In the second interview with Iggy Azalea, which takes place almost a year later in April 2014, similar patterns and themes occur; however, Azalea is not accompanied by T.I. and seems to have matured significantly. This interview is conducted by The Breakfast Club, consisting of DJ Envy, Angela Yee, and Charlamagne Tha God. Azalea has obviously worked on her interview skills since the previous interview, as she articulates well-formed opinions and carefully hedges her responses. However, the construction of her as a naïve, young woman has not entirely dissipated. Azalea not only refers to herself multiple times in the interview as 'young' but distances herself from serious conversation with claims that she is living in the moment and just enjoying herself. The result is a significantly more light-hearted interview, in which overt discussions of race or appropriation are absent. However, beneath the surface, it is evident that the interviewers have serious questions regarding Azalea's position in hip-hop, which results in off-balance mixture of deep and shallow conversation.

In Excerpt (5.6), Charlamagne offers an interesting observation about Azalea's progression as an artist. He notes a shift from what K. Foxx described in the first interview as a 'down-south accent' to a mix of pop and hip-hop. He remarks twice that she has finally found her place, enticing her to respond:

Excerpt (5.6)

Charlamagne (4:01): It seems like you found your groove too, like people always say that you know like you had like a down-south sounding sound but now it seems like you got like the pop hip-hop thing going. Seems like you're in your lane.
Azalea: Yeah, it's good. It's a good mix. It's been good to get out I think and travel and find different influences cause I really am a big sponge still, I'm very young so I pick up what's around me so it's been nice to yeah get every season, hear different sounds from different parts of the world and kind of mix them in and I think 'Fancy's a good kinda reflection of that. It's like really west coast sounding but then it's got Charlie on the hook and I think it gives it like just that

11 bit of a different vibe.

The idea of being in one's groove or lane is also discussed in Macklemore's interview with The Breakfast Club (see Excerpt [5.12]). Both Charlamagne and Azalea seem to see being different as positive, which is note-worthy considering that McLeod (2012) defines an authentic member in very specific terms and leaves little room for difference. By seeing Azalea's differences as positive, the conversation participants leave the door open for a redefining of what it means to be an authentic member of the hip-hop community.

Azalea's response to Charlamagne also begins to construct an identity for her in this conversation. By calling herself 'a big sponge' and 'very young,' Azalea crafts herself as new and therefore perhaps not fully defined. She leaves the door open for her identity within the community to continue to change by discussing how she is still tweaking her craft as she explores influences from around the world. This construction could be seen as both positive and negative in terms of authenticity. Excerpt (5.6) shows that she is perhaps not fully dedicated to hip-hop, as she is freely mixing sounds into her music that are not from within the genre. Her connection to pop would also probably not be considered positive. However, the fact that she is still exploring and trying to find her true sound indicates that she is concerned with staying to true to herself and making music that represents her, which would help her to be constructed as authentic according to McLeod's socio-psychological dimension of authenticity. In some ways, she seems to be asking community members to sit back and wait until she has found herself before judging her.

As discussed in the background section on Iggy Azalea, Azalea is both a hip-hop artist and a model. Her two careers have led to accusations that Azalea is not dedicated to

hip-hop. In Excerpt (5.7), Angela and Azalea discuss how her career as a hip-hop artist has affected her career in modeling:

Excerpt (5.7)

Angela (5:17): I was also reading about you in the fashion world now and of course we've been seeing you front row at all these fashion shows, which is something you've always wanted to do and all your spreads but you look like a model, you've always modeled anyway so it seemed like a natural transition for you but there were some issues because you're a hip-hop artist as well.
Azalea: Yeah cause I'm a hip-hop artist so I think um it's weird. I feel like the fashion world, the, they love rap music but then the, I feel like the designers love rap music and they love crazy things but then I feel like the people that kinda write about fashion or report about fashion are more straight-laced and not so
Angela: [and not as edgy
Azalea: [yeah, they're not as edgy. like the people that are actually getting the crazy inspiration and making these clothes and stuff, they're actually kinda like actually creative and they understand that but the people that write about it, I feel like kinda sometimes don't get it so it's weird like what the press really does influence people sort of like perception of you or what they think of you.

While Azalea does not get into specifics in this excerpt, it is clear that her two careers do not mesh and in many ways negatively affect each other. While it is not stated directly, Azalea seems to think that, while designers may appreciate hip-hop, the rest of the modeling community sees her association with hip-hop as detrimental. She divides the modeling community into 'edgy' and 'straight-laced,' linking those who enjoy hip-hop, who are get crazy inspiration and are creative, with this construction of edgy, and those who report on fashion and do not appreciate hip-hop with the construction of straight-laced.

Azalea also recognizes that reporters influence how people think about her, which has obviously forced her to reconsider how she constructs herself in light of her opposing careers and various community affiliations. This shift is a drastic change from her last

interview, in which she was very uninhibited in her discussions, sometimes to the point that T.I. had to correct her or stop her from talking. In this way, she seems to have matured, despite her continuous proclamations regarding her youth. She seems to recognize that her acceptance in any of the communities she chooses to inhabit is based on her performance in situations such as these. This is further highlighted by her repetition of the phrase 'it's weird.' This phrase seems to be evidence of her inability to articulate why this division exists; she knows that there is something not right about reporters taking issue with her music career; however, she either cannot physically put it into words or may feel that it is inappropriate to do so, knowing that whatever she says will affect society's view of her. Either way, she recognizes that her position in the two communities has put her at a disadvantage, although she has yet to articulate who is to blame for the disadvantage.

Discussion regarding journalists and the public's perception of Azalea continues as the conversation turns to the subject of the release of Azalea's first mainstream album. In Excerpt (5.8), Charlamagne pushes Azalea to discuss her expectations for the upcoming album:

Excerpt (5.8)

1 Charlamagne (15:30): What would calm your nerves when your album comes out,
2 like what would make you be like (sigh of relief), like make you queef a little bit?
3 Azalea: What would make me queef a little bit? (Laughs) I don't know, I don't
4 Charlamagne: [(Laughs)
5 Azalea: know
6 Charlamagne: [what uh critical acclaim, album sales?
7 Azalea: [no [cause I doubt, I doubt I'll get
8 that cause I just feel like people just
9 Charlamagne: [gonna hate
10 Azalea: Yeah, haters gonna hate
11 Angela: No but you just notice, you just notice the hate more than you notice the
12 love cause you have shows, and people know all the lyrics to your music

Azalea: yeah, I know that but um I mean in terms of journalism, people that will write about my music, I'd never expect them to like hail me like Eminem or something cause I know that's not going to happen so I kinda don't really look for that I don't really look to that because it's just, will just be disappointing.
Charlamagne: I don't think they've figured you out yet. I don't think they know what exactly you are.
Azalea: No, I don't they do either, but it's fine.

One aspect to take note of is Charlamagne's use of the term 'queef,' which is a colloquial term for vaginal flatulence. This is not the only example of vulgarity in this interview. In fact, all participants engage in the use of vulgarity, and Charlamagne pushes Azalea to say daring things. In this instance, as throughout the rest of the interview, Azalea refuses to take the bait, instead laughing in response to Charlamagne's antics. Instead, in line 3, Azalea repeats Charlamagne's question, showing that she is not responding not because of an aversion to vulgarity or because she did not understand the question. Through the repetition, she indicates that her confusion (seen in her repeating 'I don't know' in lines 3 and 5) is in regards to how to respond. This maneuver, however, is ultimately unsuccessful as Charlamagne rephrases the question once Azalea gives a dispreferred response. Her deference, however, may be more of a response to the question in general, rather than to Charlamagne's use of the term 'queef.' This is supported by her response in lines 7-10. She does not see overwhelming success in her album because 'haters gonna hate.' Although she doesn't expand on this idea, she is clearly significantly less naïve than she was in the first interview, as she is much more careful in her responses to the interviewers' questions. Instead of offering honest and detailed responses outright to the interviewers' questions, Azalea offers responses that contain significantly less detail and hedge any opinions she might offer. She cannot ignore the people's criticism of her (see analysis of YouTube commentary or Macklemore's interview with Hot 97), and, while

she tries to take the criticism in stride with the claim ‘haters gonna hate,’ her use of hedging throughout this excerpt (I don’t know, I doubt, I kinda don’t really) indicates that the criticism is perhaps more painful than she might let on. Angela attempts to align with Azalea in lines 11-12, showing sensitivity for how Azalea has been positioned, but Azalea reverts to a matter of fact explanation in lines 14-15, in which she states that she does not expect that she will ever be ‘hail[ed] like Eminem,’ although she does not indicate what Eminem possesses that she does not. When she states ‘I don’t really look to that because it’s just, will just be disappointing,’ she again comes off almost as self-pitying, forcing Charlamagne to comment in lines 17-18 that the hip-hop community just has not figured her out yet, but she brushes the consolation off by saying ‘it’s fine,’ effectively ending that line of conversation.

One subcategory of ‘haters’ is Azalea’s home country, Australia. In Excerpt (5.9), Angela asks Azalea how she is being treated in Australia, referencing previous knowledge of her poor treatment. It becomes apparent that Azalea is again carefully shaping her response so as not to offend or cause more controversy:

Excerpt (5.9)

1 Angela (17:21): How they treat you in Australia now?
2 Azalea: They treat me *good*
3 Angela: Better?
4 Azalea: Definitely better. My song ‘Fancy’s doing really well there so I think it’s
5 better and Beyoncé really, really helped with that
6 Charlamagne: but the people though, how do the people treat you? Like you…
7 Azalea: [They’re
8 pretty alright. They’re better. (Laughs)
9 Charlamagne: [They’re better, okay
10 Angela: [It’s better, that’s all, (laughs) that’s all we can hope
11 for.
12 Charlamagne: How did Beyoncé help with ‘Fancy,’ opening for her tour?
13 Azalea: She just helped me to have I think um more acceptance when I went there

14 and opened for her and having her cosign. It helped a lot and so I think then the
15 next song that I put out after having that presence there with her was 'Fancy' and
16 so I think there was already sort of an openness or willingness to *like* what I put
17 out because they love her so much.

In line 2, Azalea carefully hedges her response to Angela's question. She makes a face and stretches out the word 'good,' which shows that 'good' may not accurately describe Australia's treatment of her. Following Angela's follow-up question, Azalea opens up a bit more, indicating that her presence on Beyoncé's tour has encouraged Australians to accept her. Azalea's relationship with Beyoncé, in which Azalea opens for Beyoncé's shows and in return benefits from Beyoncé's popularity and acceptance, is pretty common in the hip-hop community. Similar to Dr. Dre's sponsorship of Eminem and Little Wayne's sponsorship of Nicki Minaj, Azalea needs artists who are established in the hip-hop community to publicly show their support for her. By opening for Beyoncé's tour, Azalea could show fans that she is accepted by her fellow artists, encouraging fans to accept her also. In lines 16-17, she articulates this, explaining that Australians disliked her, and they needed to be pushed to accept her, which happened due to her association with Beyoncé. The fact that Azalea is not outright accepted anywhere, even her home country, reaffirms the sense of displacement that was previously seen in Excerpt (5.7). Although her acceptance seems to be on the rise, Azalea's comments indicate that she has previously struggled to be accepted in a variety of communities, not just the hip-hop community.

Macklemore's Interview with The Breakfast Club

Macklemore was interviewed by DJ Envy and Charlamagne Tha God of The Breakfast Club in August 2013. At the time of the interview, Macklemore was still rising to fame, having not yet reached the peak of mainstream notoriety. Charlamagne is the

primary interviewer, asking Macklemore about his position in the hip-hop community, similar to Ebro and Charlamagne's questions in Azalea's interviews. However, through this interview (and the interview with Ebro that follows), it is evident that there is not as much controversy surrounding Macklemore as there is surrounding Azalea. The conversation in the following interview does not carry the slightly accusatory tone that is seen in The Breakfast Club's interview with Azalea. Also, Macklemore, at the time of this interview, had been active in hip-hop for approximately a decade. He was therefore more prepared to answer questions about his position in hip-hop than Azalea was in her first interview. His preparedness helps him construct an identity as a prepared, informed, but still relatively new member in the hip-hop community.

In Excerpt (5.10), Macklemore discusses his song, "Same Love," which champions gay rights. As Macklemore discusses in this interview, his decision to release this song has been the subject of controversy, raising questions such as 'is Macklemore gay?'. In the following excerpt, Macklemore explains his reasoning for releasing 'Same Love':

Excerpt (5.10)

Macklemore (3:49): You have a story, you talk about your life, and I went back, and I mean the most vulnerable thing I've ever written on a record was 'when I was in the third grade I thought that I was gay.' […] It was a bigger issue than umm if people might think that. I wanted to put myself out there in a way that was, it was real, and hold myself accountable, hold hip-hop accountable because it's a very homophobic art form and um you know just challenge not only myself but the listeners to talk about an issue that I feel like doesn't really get addressed within hip-hop music.

Macklemore creates a distinctive stance in this excerpt by calling out the hip-hop community for being homophobic, while at the same time grouping himself with the community. In line 5, he phrases it as 'holding himself/hip-hop accountable,' as if he is

the only one doing so. His decision to write ‘Same Love’ contrasts him with McLeod’s gender-sexual dimension as to valorize gay rights goes against the correct performance of a heteronormative male in the hip-hop community; however, at the same time, he affirms his authenticity according to the socio-psychological dimension. By writing a song that he describes in line 2 as ‘vulnerable,’ and in line 5 as 'real,’ he indicates that standing up for issues such as these, even when they do not personally pertain to him, is part of staying true to himself. In this way, Macklemore creates a place for himself in the community that is separate from most of the other members. Like Azalea, Macklemore seems to take pride in the way he differs from other hip-hop artists and developed his own niche (see Excerpt [5.6]).

Because he is relatively new to the scene in terms of mainstream hip-hop, Charlamagne questions Macklemore about his position in the hip-hop community. However, his questions are far more open-ended than Ebro’s, and Macklemore in clearly more prepared than Azalea to answer them. In Excerpt (5.11), Macklemore gives his own assessment of his place amongst other mainstream rappers:

Excerpt (5.11)

1 Charlamagne (7:58): Now you wanna be mentioned in like the hip-hop
2 conversation, like you, when you sit down, so you want to be mentioned with the
3 Macklemore: [Of course
4 Charlamagne: Kendricks and those guys?
5 Macklemore: [Absolutely. I mean I’m a competitive person. I think that
6 um you know I understand why people get put into boxes. I think that like you
7 know once you have a song like a ‘Thrift Shop’ or even a ‘Can’t Hold Us,’ it's
8 easy for people to like label it one thing but if you listen to the body of the album,
9 if you listen to the work, if um you know you do some, some YouTube searches, I
10 think it's easy to see um you know first and foremost I’m a MC and that's where
11 this all started from so absolutely I mean I'm competitive, I'm a rapper, I'm good
12 at it, and that's and it's my job.

Macklemore's response to Charlamagne's question in lines 1-2 about being mentioned in the hip-hop conversation supports his construction of himself as prepared and informed. In line 6, when he states 'I understand why people get put into boxes,' he shows the audience that he is not blind to the issues, that he recognizes that, whether it's because of his race or the themes in his music, he will be labeled in one way or another. He also does not attempt to refute those labels, perhaps recognizing the futility of doing so. However, replying 'of course' to Charlamagne's question in line 3 indicates that, regardless of those labels, Macklemore expects to be represented in this hip-hop conversation. This is supported in lines 11-12, where Macklemore refuses to be disregarded. In a show of confidence, he implies that he will not be disregarded because of a label (line 8; in this case, mostly likely his label as a 'white rapper'). This confidence, which is an element of hypermasculinity in the hip-hop community, could possibly earn him a few points back in terms of the gender-sexual dimension, as he reminds the audience that he will not back down or be defeated.

Charlamagne continues this line of questioning in Excerpt (5.12). He questions whether Macklemore is carrying a grudge because the hip-hop community only began to support him once he became successful. Macklemore carefully hedges his answer, again contributing to the identity he has constructed in this interview as a prepared and informed community member:

Excerpt (5.12)

1 Charlamagne (11:15): Is everyone trying to do features with you and stuff now?
2 Macklemore: Mhmm
3 DJ Envy: (laughs)
4 Charlamagne: Are you turning them down or are you? Cause you got a slight
5 grudge on your shoulder, slight chip on your shoulder.
6 Macklemore: I don't have a chip. I just wanna make music with the people that I

wanna make music with. I don't wanna do anything calculated. Um, you know I think that you know I've learned a little bit this year about picking the right records to do and for the right reasons, and you know it comes down to time. Like, we just haven't had any time, so in 2014 I'm looking forward to doing more, more features but umm
Charlamagne: [who do you think you mesh with though? Like I look at you; you're like on an island unto yourself.
Macklemore: Yeah. […] It just comes down to the right, the right record. I don't think, I think that we created kind of our own lane but that doesn't mean that that doesn't work with other people.

In response to Charlamagne's question in lines 4-5, Macklemore denies that he has a chip on his shoulder. Although Macklemore does not indicate to which artists he is referring, he does not deny that hip-hop artists want to work with him now that he is famous, perhaps artists who previously gave him the cold shoulder. However, he does not go into detail regarding this matter. He seems to recognize that, by disrespecting the community, he would only hurt himself. Instead, he focuses on staying true to himself, which goes back to McLeod's socio-psychological dimension. His remark in line 7 about not wanting to do anything calculated reminds the audience that, while he is happy that he has become so successful, the focus of his career is to produce meaningful music that accurately represents him. This response also helps to make questions such as 'so why haven't you done any features yet?' less relevant. By referencing time issues in addition to creating the right music, he heads off questions that could perhaps lead to a discussion of which artists want to work with him and conversely which artists have perhaps refused, which could ultimately indicate Macklemore's current level of acceptance amongst other mainstream artists within the hip-hop community.

Charlamagne comes back with a comment about Macklemore being on an island unto himself in lines 12-13, asking him with whom he would work well musically. Charlamagne seems to be indirectly commenting on Macklemore's unique music style, a

style that does not necessarily blend with the rest of the hip-hop community. He does not go so far as to call Macklemore out for producing music that does not match the community's style; however, his question forces Macklemore to comment on that issue. Instead of doing so though, in line 14, Macklemore skillfully avoids directly answering the question by repeating his previous statement about producing the right record. He admits that he is unlike other artists; however, he then comes back with a statement that implies that different is not wrong. By stating in lines 15-16 that being different does not mean he cannot work well with other artists, Macklemore makes a strong claim about uniformity in the community, implying that difference should not be seen as wrong but as valuable and that difference does not mean failure, as Macklemore has been so successful despite his 'different' style.

Despite Macklemore's seeming attempts to not directly reference the issue of race in this interview, the discussion is inevitable. In Except (5.13), Charlamagne and Macklemore discuss why Macklemore's success is problematic for many members of the hip-hop community:

Excerpt (5.13)

Macklemore (15:28): I think that as a, as a white rapper, I feel like sometimes people feel like there's only so much a room as, as white rapper. […]
Charlamagne: Are there still white rappers? Do people still label it as white rappers? Like when I look at you I don't say, I don't say Macklemore the white
Macklemore: [yes
Charlamagne: rapper. I just say Macklemore. […]
Macklemore: I think that you know people feel like there's only so much money out there to get or whatever and, and uh, it's just not true, but you know fear is, fear is prevalent within art and artists are sensitive and you know (shrugs).
Charlamagne: Do you feel like you're an easy target? I mean I see you know guys like from Future [another mainstream hip-hop artist] try to get at you sometimes. Like who is this Macklemore guy?
Macklemore: Uh, no. I don't think that I'm an easy target at all. I think that um, I

14 don't think uh. What you're talking about, he wasn't really trying to get at me.
15 […] In general, people try to go for the person that's in the lead, like that's how
16 hip-hop's always been and I'm not going to say I'm in the lead but um we're up
17 there.

It is interesting that Macklemore defines himself as a 'white rapper' when, in Excerpt 11, he talks about not wanting to be labeled or put in a box. Macklemore seems to recognize that he cannot avoid the fact that he is inauthentic according to the racial dimension of authenticity; therefore he cannot dodge this label. However, Charlamagne's comment in lines 4-6 are perhaps more note-worthy than Macklemore's self-labeling. His argument that he does not see Macklemore as a 'white rapper' but simply as a rapper equates to the 'I don't see color' argument. In some ways, it seems to be overcompensation on Charlamagne's part, an attempt to show that he is above an issue that is still relevant to any discussion regarding Macklemore.

Macklemore's comments in this excerpt also refer to issues of race. He argues that community members have issues with him because they believe that there is only so much room (line 2) or money (line 7) in the community, meaning that Macklemore should not take away from other, perhaps more authentic, members. He states that this belief stems from fear, which in line 9 he argues is 'prevalent within art.' Artists fear that other rappers' success or fortune means that there is no room for them. This is perhaps why the community is overly concerned with the authenticity of its members. Charlamagne does not comment on this argument, which could indicate that it is such a common argument that they do not need to discuss it further. Instead, he asks Macklemore whether he thinks he is an easy target, considering that other artists have criticized him in the past. Macklemore gives a surprising response in lines 15-19, arguing not that his race makes him a target (which is what one would expect) but that people

criticize him because he is in the lead. He hedges that response, stating that he is not trying to say that he is in the lead but that he is perhaps one of few up there. Macklemore also claims that he is not an easy target (line 13) and that Future was not trying to 'get at' him (line 14). The use of hedging is again an attempt to show solidarity with the hip-hop community. Macklemore does not want to come across as better than other members (lines 16-17) or accuse other members of attacking him (lines 14-15). However, he also does not want to be seen as weak, as the community values hypermasculinity, which involves at least some degree of competitiveness. By carefully constructing his responses, Macklemore ensures that he maintains the identity of a prepared and informed community member.

Excerpt (5.14) occurs in the final minutes of the interview, after Macklemore invites Charlamagne and DJ Envy to attend his concert. This short exchange indicates that, despite Charlamagne's comments in Excerpt (5.13), race is still an issue:

Excerpt (5.14)

1 Charlamagne (25:50): I come to your kind of shows, I just don't go to black
2 shows, that's where all the trouble is.
3 Macklemore: Yeah

This short exchange is problematic to say the least. In Excerpt (5.13), Charlamagne attempted to claim that he does not categorize Macklemore as a 'white rapper.' However, in this excerpt, he refers to Macklemore's shows as 'your kind of shows,' indicating not only that he does see race but that he attributes specific identity constructions to race, specifically that white rappers' shows do not attract trouble, whereas black rappers' shows do. This short exchange reminds the audience that, at least for now, the conversation on authenticity in the hip-hop community has not yet moved past the issue

of race. Despite Macklemore's attempts to claim criticism of him as the result of his competitive spirit or his success, it seems that one of the primary motivations for criticism of his performances continues to be race, a topic which turns out to be the focus of his interview with Hot 97 over a year later.

Macklemore's Interview with Hot 97

Macklemore was interviewed by Ebro and Rosenberg of Hot 97 in December 2014. When published on YouTube, the interview was titled "Great Race Debate with Macklemore on Ebro in the Morning!," indicating that it would focus on issues of race in regards to Macklemore's position in the hip-hop community. This interview differs significantly from Ebro's interview with Iggy Azalea. The participants afford each other significantly longer speaking turns than in the interviews with Azalea, and the issues discussed center less on Macklemore as an artist, and more on greater issues, such as race, in hip-hop and in the larger American society. In fact, as the interview progresses, it begins to feel less like an interview and more like an intellectual debate amongst colleagues. This interview also differs from Macklemore's interview with The Breakfast Club, where he constructed himself and was constructed by the interviewers as a relatively new member in the hip-hop community. As will be shown through an analysis of excerpts from the interview, the participants position Macklemore as a knowledgeable and established community member, in comparison to Azalea, who Ebro positioned in her interview and in this one as a naïve, young woman in need of instruction.

In Excerpt (5.15), the participants discuss segregation in the music industry, specifically the separation between what Ebro calls 'white radio' and 'black radio.' Through Ebro and Rosenberg's questions, Macklemore is positioned to discuss why he is

seen as ‘safe’ or acceptable by parents when other hip-hop artists are not. The exchange plays out as follows:

Excerpt (5.15)

Ebro (11:40): Do you believe that your music got embraced by let’s call it for lack of a better term white radio right because you’re white and you rap?
Macklemore: Yes. Yes. I do. Absolutely.
Ebro: So you feel that if you were a black artist, they wouldn’t have supported you.
Rosenberg: If a black rapper had made ‘Can’t Hold Us,’ you don’t think that it necessarily, it would have necessarily had the same effect?
Macklemore: I can’t go that far. I will say this. I will say this. This is how I answer this question, and this is something that you know we’ve talked about, I’ve thought about, I’ve talked about it, and these are some things that have come up. Why am I safe? Why can I cuss on a record, have a parental advisory on the cover of my album, yet parents are like ‘you’re the only rapper I let my kids listen to.’

Macklemore is careful in his response to Ebro’s and Rosenberg’s questions. He indicates that he has received questions like this before in lines 8-9, when he states, “This is how I answer this question.” Such statements help, along with his response in lines 11-13, to build his credibility as the knowledgeable and established community member. He not only shows that he has been paying attention to these issues but that he has given significant thought to them, instead of responding off the cuff. His question “Why am I safe?” in line 11 combined with “you’re the only rapper I let my kids listen to” in lines 12-13 show that Macklemore clearly understands his position as a white rapper in hip-hop. Because of this position, he is seen as ‘safe,’ even when he is performing the identity construction of ‘hip-hop artist’ correctly (cussing, parental advisory), which usually indicates that the artist is not ‘safe.’ His identity as a ‘safe’ artist means that his music can be played on ‘white’ radio. By questioning this contradiction, in which mainstream, white society embraces his music because he is white while at the same time

refusing to embrace the rest of hip-hop because it's predominantly black and therefore unsafe, Macklemore proves to the hip-hop community that he is aware of his privilege as a white artist and condemns that privilege However, he also does not refuse the privilege or the benefits that stem from it, which is problematic in itself.

As the interview progresses, Ebro brings up an interview that he conducted recently with Azalea Banks, a black, female hip-hop artist who began gaining notoriety around the same time as Iggy Azalea. That interview caused significant controversy in the hip-hop community because, in it, Banks calls Azalea out for being inauthentic. She claims that Azalea has no place in hip-hop because she is white. In Excerpt (5.16), the following exchange occurs after Ebro asks Macklemore what he thought about the interview:

Excerpt (5.16)

Macklemore (28:10): There's a lot of truth in that interview. A lot of truth.
Ebro: You mean with white appropriation.
Macklemore: With white appropriation absolutely but
Ebro: [and devaluing black creation and art and all that
Macklemore: [absolutely.
[…]
Rosenberg (28:43): We don't know all the reasons that things didn't quite go for her right away like they should have. But you can imagine the frustration of watching another artist, even though Iggy and her are very different, and again I don't blame Iggy for this, but you're talking about a white artist who came about at the same time whose last name is the same as your first name, who's exploding and you're just grinding it out with your fans, and many people would say that creatively Azalea Banks is the much more brilliant of the two artists. That is, I can imagine the frustration and the feeling that wow could there be a more blatant cultural appropriation.

The fact that Macklemore is willing to admit that there is truth behind Bank's claims that Iggy Azalea is guilty of 'white appropriation' is quite interesting. Considering that

Macklemore and Azalea are often grouped together when discussing white artists in hip-hop, it is odd that Macklemore would concede in this manner. However, because Banks does not directly call Macklemore out in her interview and because Azalea is tied to this identity construction of a naïve, young woman, Macklemore benefits by agreeing with Bank's argument. He creates distance between himself and Azalea by not taking her side, simultaneously distancing himself from claims of appropriation and further substantiating his identity construction as a knowledgeable and established community member.

This concession opens the door for Ebro to discuss where other rappers have fallen in the discussion of cultural/white appropriation and the role of success regarding claims of appropriation. He discusses his thoughts on the matter in Excerpt (5.17):

Excerpt (5.17)

Ebro (30:12): Where I'm at today is you know I don't think Azalea Banks has an issue with white rappers that are good in her mind, and which is where the white appropriation conversation kinda is the, is kinda the crossroads. When someone is talented, no one will ever say Eminem was trying to take black music. He liked hip-hop, he could rhyme, and he wanted to rap. Right, I never heard that about Macklemore before and then when you won best rap album then it's like oh he's trying to take hip-hop from, which is like no, he was underground, he worked his way up and he won an award and he even thought that Kendrick [referring to Kendrick Lamar, another famous rapper] had a better album than he did and was a great hip-hop album. I don't think Iggy Azalea set out on a sinister plan to but what ends up happening is you have marketers and businesses that go oh this is sellable and here's why. Back to the numbers and the population of America.

Ebro makes an interesting distinction between white rappers who are talented (like Eminem) and those who are not. For Ebro, it is more difficult to challenge a rapper's position in the community if the rapper is talented. In lines 3-4, he states that "When someone is talented, no one will ever say Eminem was trying to take black music." Part of Eminem's success in the community is based on, as Ebro puts it, his talent as an artist. On the other end of the spectrum, if a rapper is not talented, his/her lack of talent

becomes part of the ammunition in an argument against the rapper's inclusion in the community. While Ebro does not directly call out Iggy Azalea for lack of talent, this talent/lack of talent argument stems from Azalea Bank's animosity for her. He therefore seems to be arguing that Azalea is the focus of Bank's argument *because* she is not as talented. According to that same argument, Macklemore has received fewer objections because he is, as least in Ebro's eyes, more talented than some other hip-hop artists (particularly Azalea).

The other point that Ebro is making in Excerpt (5.17) is that accusations of appropriation may also be the product of an artist's mainstream success. When he discusses the hostility towards Macklemore in lines 5-9, he frames it around the award that Macklemore won. Ebro argues that, prior to winning an award, Macklemore didn't receive much negative attention; however, once he won, people began accusing him of 'taking hip-hop.' The reasoning behind this is unclear; however, two explanations stand out as possibilities: (1) because an artist is in the spotlight, more people are aware of him/her. Therefore he/she is more open to scrutiny. (2) Because the artist has achieved mainstream success, community members feel that he/she is taking away from the success of other artists. In terms of Macklemore, this means that because Macklemore won the award, Kendrick Lamar didn't; therefore, Macklemore is taking away from the success of Lamar and other artists who are, in the community's eyes, more authentic and/or perhaps more worthy of success. While neither explanation can be confirmed, both seem plausible and can easily explain why Macklemore's position in the community was not called out until he was in the spotlight.

The conversation regarding cultural appropriation continues as Macklemore and Ebro discuss the position of white artists in the hip-hop community. In Excerpt (5.18), Macklemore discusses his belief that part of being accepted in the community is knowing one's place, that there is not a situation in which full acceptance is possible. Instead, white artists will have to continue to be careful about how they conduct themselves as community members. Macklemore and Ebro build on the position that white artists are guests in a community that is grounded in the struggles of the Black American community:

Excerpt (5.18)

Macklemore (35:32): I think this is to me, this is what it comes down to is that you need to know your place in the culture. Are you contributing or are you taking? Are you using it for your own advantage or are you contributing to the culture? And that's subjective, right, that's completely subjective, but I think it's clear who has contributed and clear who is taking and I'm not, I'm not going to comment on Iggy in that regard. I'm not, I'm not going to do that, but what I will say is that I saw a tweet, it was something along the lines of hip-hop was birthed out of the civil rights movement. This is a culture that came from pain, that came from oppression, it came from white oppression. It was the byproduct of that. Now, again, we can say that we've evolved and that we've come a long way since the late seventies early eighties but
Ebro: [evidence suggests
Macklemore: [that we haven't so you can't, you can't disregard that just because there's been more white rappers, just because there's been more successful white rappers, you cannot disregard where this culture came from and our place in it as white people.

Macklemore creates a dichotomy here that goes back to McLeod's (2012) cultural dimension, in which, in order to be authentic, one must value hip-hop as a culture with meaningful traditions rather than as a commodity (p. 172). In lines 2-4, he states that knowing your place in a culture means contributing rather than 'using it for your own advantage.' Macklemore demonstrates that he understands the role of history and

tradition in the hip-hop community. While he will not ‘comment on Iggy in that regard,’ he also does not defend her against claims that Azalea is profiting off of hip-hop without contributing to the community. In other words, her relationship with the community is very one-sided, which could open her up to charges of inauthenticity according to the cultural dimension. Macklemore, however, is also indirectly commenting on his own position in hip-hop in this discussion. By knowing what matters in the community, he again proves himself to be the knowledgeable and established community member, and he implicitly constructs himself as a member who actively contributes and is not simply profiting from his association with the community.

In lines 7-16, Macklemore also makes the claim that ‘hip-hop was birthed out of the civil rights movement,’ therefore one ‘cannot disregard where this culture came from and our place in it as white people.’ This claim is tied to his previous argument; however, it takes the argument one step further. According to Macklemore, because the hip-hop community was fostered out of white oppression, ‘white people’ need to carefully consider their place in the culture. Although they themselves probably never participated in the oppression, they benefited from it; therefore, they must recognize that they are guests in a community founded on experiences that they themselves have never had. This ties into the criticism of Eminem discussed in the literature review. As discussed earlier, white rappers can never truly understand the struggle of being black because they have all the privileges associated with whiteness. Macklemore recognizes this criticism and embraces it, perhaps as a move to gain more acceptance. By taking authority over the very argument which could displace him in this community, Macklemore challenges critics to find another way to argue for his inauthenticity, as one cannot use an argument

(such as the one indicated above) if the opposing party accepts the argument as true. In other words, by Macklemore taking control of the argument regarding his white privilege, he prevents others from using that argument against him.

Discussion

It is evident, especially in Macklemore's interview with Ebro, that white rappers are often grouped together and therefore compared against each other. However, Azalea and Macklemore manage to construct distinct identities as they grapple with issues of race, authenticity and their individual positions in the hip-hop community. Azalea struggles more for acceptance than Macklemore. In her first interview, she fails to take the discussion seriously, forcing T.I. to attempt to manage her responses and the interviewers' questions. Through this interview, Azalea constructs herself as a naïve, young woman who is unprepared to deal with the issue of her authenticity or acceptance within the community. In terms of McLeod's semantic dimensions of authenticity, Azalea does not convincingly construct herself as an insider. Ebro's comments in Excerpt (5.4) create doubt regarding her motivation for wanting to be a part of the hip-hop community. He indirectly accuses her (and T.I.) of selling out (political-economic dimension) and not staying true to herself (socio-psychological). However, her deference to T.I. helps her to correctly perform the gender-sexual dimension, in which female hip-hop artists must rely on male artists in order to be successful within the community. Azalea's construction of herself as reliant on T.I. helps her to recover at least a small amount of credibility.

In the second interview, she repairs some of the damage, constructing herself as a better-informed yet still young and relatively new community member. Her discussion in

Excerpt (5.6) helps the audience to see her as someone who is trying to stay true to herself (socio-psychological dimension) but who is still finding her sound. She does not focus on mainstream success in Excerpt (5.8), which gives her some credibility in terms of the political-economic dimension. These interviewers therefore co-construct with Azalea a picture of an artist who is new to the community and is therefore still finding her place within it. These interviews co-construct her as a performer who has not yet developed a fully authentic identity, therefore leaving the door open for community members to continue to criticize her.

Meanwhile, Macklemore faces less pushback than Azalea. Although, in the first interview, he constructs himself as a relatively new member in the hip-hop community, he still manages to come across as prepared and informed, responding to the interviewers' questions thoughtfully and intelligently. In terms of McLeod's semantic dimensions, Macklemore constructs himself both positively and negatively in relation to an authentic hip-hop identity. 'Staying true to oneself' (the socio-psychological dimension) is an obvious theme throughout the interview, as Macklemore consistently references the need to do what is right for him. This helps him construct himself as authentic according to the political-economic dimension, as he is less concerned with selling records or making money than he is with creating music that represents his true self. In terms of the gender-sexual dimension, however, Macklemore presents a more complex identity construction, as his competiveness would support his authenticity while the discussion of his song 'Same Love' could be seen as detrimental.

In the second interview, Macklemore is no longer the new community member. Instead, he constructs himself as a knowledgeable and established community member,

discussing controversial issues with ease and spouting well thought out opinions on race and hip-hop. He recreates the same identity constructions in terms of the socio-psychological and the political-economic dimensions, while distancing himself from any discussion of the gender-sexual dimension by focusing on larger issues (such as race) rather than his controversial song, "Same Love," or his relationships with other members of the hip-hop community. His most significant contributions are in terms of the cultural dimension. He affirms his knowledge of the traditions and history of the hip-hop community throughout the interview but most clearly in Excerpt (5.18). Through his discussion with Ebro and Rosenberg, he dispels a number of arguments against him. However, his discussion of white rappers needing to know their place complicates matters, perhaps forcing some community members to rethink their ideas about what is means to be authentic according to McLeod's racial dimension.

CHAPTER SIX: ANALYSIS OF YOUTUBE COMMENTARY

Introduction

YouTube commentary provides a unique way of investigating how one's authenticity is regarded, as speakers maintain a level of anonymity on the internet that allows them to speak more openly about their opinions on certain matters. However, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005) note, "even in the most fleeting of interactional moves, speakers position themselves and others as particular kinds of people" (p. 595). Commenters position themselves and others in traditional ways, shaping their own identities just as much as they are shaping the public identities of the artists they are speaking about in the commentary below. This process is known as stancetaking, "where social actors evaluate objects, position themselves and other social actors, and dis/align themselves with other subjects" (Johansson, 2012, p. 154). In this case, the object of stance, described by Du Bois (2007) as "the specific target toward which the evaluation is oriented" (p. 143), is Macklemore or Azalea. Through a series of moves – challenging, establishing authority, and/or establishing common ground—commenters construct identities for themselves as they (dis)align themselves with certain communities, positions, or arguments. This alignment, despite the fact that is grounded in individual opinion, becomes verifiable fact. According to Chun (2013),

> The collectivity of the subjective statements of 'I love you' transforms [the artist] from someone loved by individuals into someone who embodies an objective attractive masculinity[/femininity], evidenced by vast alignment in this YouTube

> space; individual opinion thus becomes transformed into a verifiable fact of public opinion. (p. 607-608)

Therefore, in analyzing YouTube commentary, one can begin to develop 'the facts' about how some members of the hip-hop community perceive and ultimately construct Azalea and Macklemore.

Iggy Azalea

At the time of data collection, Azalea had released six music videos on YouTube, five of which are based on songs from her album *The New Classic* (Deluxe Edition). The comments in response to her music videos were both positive and negative. While her devout fan base consistently made comments such as "Go Iggy!! You are the best rapper" and "Queen of rap! This song is going to stay in the top 10 on billboard hot 100. SHE DESERVES IT," there was also a consistent stream of comments such as "Queen of crap" and "This shit sounds like those 5$ movies Mexicans sell in crack houses." This blend of both positive and negative commentary resulted in numerous arguments between commenters, with some comment-reply chains expanding over 500 interactional turns. Through these arguments, the commenters positioned themselves as individuals, fans, critics, members of the hip-hop community, and members of other communities, as they grappled with issues regarding Azalea's music videos. Table 6.1 shows the themes and semantic dimensions of authenticity that emerged within the commentary in response to Azalea's videos. As is evident in the table, race, performance of gender, and the treatment of hip-hop as a culture proved to be the most important themes in the commentary, as commenters attempt to come to terms with Azalea as a musical artist, as a white woman, as a performer, and as a potential member of the hip-hop community.

Table 6.1: Themes and dimensions of authenticity in Azalea's YouTube commentary

Song	Commentary Themes	McLeod's Dimension(s)
Work	Linguistic authenticity, selling out	Political-economic
Bounce	Racism, cultural appropriation	Cultural
Change Your Life	Race, talent, musical talent versus community status	Racial
Fancy	Genre-mixing, sexual favors, musical talent, cultural appropriation	Gender-sexual, cultural
Black Widow	Musical talent, Azalea's body/sexuality	Gender-sexual
Beg for It	Race, political/social (in)activism	Racial, cultural

In the following analysis, the major themes of commentary for each video are examined, as well as excerpts from the most linguistically and thematically interesting comment-reply chains in response to Azalea's music videos.

"Work": Linguistic Authenticity and Selling Out

The first music video to be posted to Azalea's YouTube channel was "Work." "Work" came from Azalea's album, *The New Classic*, and was published in March 2013. At the time of data collection, the video had received 150 million views. There are two major themes that came up in the commentary in response to this video: Azalea's accent and accusations of cultural appropriation. Because this was Azalea's first video and she was still fairly new to the mainstream hip-hop scene, questions regarding her (in)authenticity were prevalent. In Excerpt (6.1), three commenters discuss Azalea's accent, her position in hip-hop, and her 'legitimacy' as a rapper:

Excerpt (6.1)[4]

A: Why in the hell is she talking like that? What type of accent is she supposed to be imitating?
B: She's Australian and she's not imitating nobody.
A: Oh my bad. I didn't even realize that Australians normally said things like "who dat" and "git ma sheit" and "na git dis work" "whatcha cawl dat" Wow. I thought she was trying to imitate a stereotypical African American accent which she thought would make her sound more legitimate as a rapper. Hmm. I had no idea that's how Australians normally talk. Thanks for the info.
B: Funny how Iggy Azalea haters such as yourself. Bring up how she's famous for only trying be black yet she's not. So the fuck what you think, she doesn't care, I don't care. If you don't like her simply get your ass up from you computer and have a life and stop hating someone else's.
A: She looks and sounds fucking stupid. This is horrible. This is what's wrong with the world. Like damn bitch. Be yourself.
C: I think she rather imitates being cool and tough and brash and shit, so she can appeal and then SELL to young, silly, identity-lacking kids that are deemed the main target group of her business.

This exchange is particularly note-worthy because, since this is Azalea's first video, the viewers are still trying to figure her out. Commenter A seems to be both confused and critical in the first exchange. A questions who Azalea is imitating, which means that (s)he sees Azalea's performance as fake or inauthentic. Commenter B attempts to (somewhat poorly) defend Azalea in line 3, which only encourages Commenter A to be more critical and elaborate on his/her original claims, using lines from Azalea's video as evidence. Commenter A identifies Azalea's accent as 'African American,' stating that Azalea was using this accent to 'sound more legitimate as a rapper.' This means that Commenter A not only sees AAE and hip-hop authenticity as synonymous but also sees any attempts to imitate/appropriate AAE as inauthentic. This connection goes back to Cutler's (2003) argument that insecure hip-hop artists "feel the need to signal their hip-hop identity in

[4] All commenters' screennames have been removed in order to maintain confidentiality (see Chapter Three for more information).

linguistically overt ways" (p. 215). A's argument that Azalea is trying too hard to sound 'real' can also be seen as evidence that Azalea's linguistic performance is an example of crossing and therefore inauthentic.

A's sarcastic remarks in lines 4-8 encourage Commenter B to label Commenter A as an 'Iggy Azalea hater,' to which Commenter A remarks that Azalea looks and sounds stupid and that she should 'be herself,' in other words not imitate other people. A clearly wants a more authentic identity performance from Azalea, as her currently performance is too fake to convince A. Perhaps the most succinct response occurs in lines 15-17, when a third commenter, Commenter C, states that Azalea is performing in this manner in order to sell, that it has less to do with trying to imitate someone and more with what will earn her money. This argument goes back to McLeod's political-economic dimension of authenticity, which discourages artists from selling out, and to Ebro's comments in Excerpt (5.4), where Ebro questioned whether Azalea's performance within the hip-hop community is "a gimmick or a character." Either way, the argument that Azalea's performance is a marketing gimmick, that she is selling out, is valid in the eyes of at least some of Azalea's audience, opening Azalea up to claims of inauthenticity according to the political-economic dimension.

"Bounce": Racism and Cultural Appropriation

Azalea's second music video, "Bounce," also came from her album. It was released two months after "Work" in May 2013. The video received only 46 million views, less than a third of the views received by "Work." This particular music video proved to be especially controversial, with numerous commenters calling the video 'racist.' The video featured Azalea and backup dancers cavorting in traditional Indian

garb surrounded by elements of Indian culture. Questions and comments regarding this matter proved to be the major theme in terms of the YouTube commentary. Excerpt (6.2) comes from an argument that began with Commenter D's remark, which mocked people for calling the video racist:

Excerpt (6.2)

D: Cannot believe people are saying this video racist. Are you ACTUALLY for real? What kind of stupid logic do you have going on in your head? If anything, she's actually embracing India and the culture, you guys should actually feel complimented because from watching this video I can myself see how great their culture is. So if you find this racist then you seriously need to take your butthurt elsewhere
E: White people fetishizing India and treating it like an ""exotic"" trend is not flattering, it's dehumanizing and racist. Indians are a group of diverse people, not a costume.
F: Taking a liking to someone else's culture is not dehumanizing. If you really believe so, say that to the many people that decide to learn English, or take the time to travel to other places.
E: There's a fine line between cultural appreciation and cultural appropriation. Learning a language and admiring a culture (respectfully, not fetishizingly) is genuine and an effective way to connect cultures. But if you steal sacred things from a culture just because you want to play dress up and look cool, you're garbage (Iggy Azalea).

This excerpt, which focuses on whether Azalea is being racist for using elements of Indian culture in her performance, neatly mirrors the larger argument regarding appropriation of hip-hop culture (McLeod's cultural dimension of authenticity). Commenter D argues that, because Azalea is embracing Indian culture and is showing how great it is (lines 3-5), it is not racist and people are simply being oversensitive. However, because Commenter D uses the phrase 'you guys' in the statement "you guys should actually feel complimented," it is evident that (s)he is not a part of Indian culture. Therefore, Commenter D's argument is perhaps not as strong as (s)he would hope, which

is why it received a lot of responses. Commenter E seems to see this flaw in D's argument. (S)he does not see value in intention, focusing instead on what Azalea has produced in this video, 'a costume' (line 9) rather than a depiction of a group of diverse individuals. Commenter F brings up an intriguing point when (s)he states in line 10 that it is not dehumanizing to like another culture, which allows Commenter E to come back with the crux of the argument – the difference between appreciation and appropriation. For Commenter E (along with many members of the hip-hop community), it is not wrong to enjoy a culture – to learn about it and participate in it in a genuine manner. However, according to E, this is not what Azalea is doing. In line 16, E argues that Azalea's intention is to play dress up and look cool, which goes back to A's argument. According to A and E, Azalea is not performing in this manner because she values the cultures from which she is taking aspects of her performance. Instead, she is appropriating these aspects in order to be successful. Commenter E's argument is an extension of Commenter A's argument; however, it adds in the cultural dimension. According to E, Azalea does not know or value the traditions and history of the culture; she is simply taking it for her own gain, which would violate the cultural dimension of authenticity.

"Change Your Life": Focusing Commentary

"Change Your Life," Azalea's third music video, premiered in September 2013. It received 49 million views, similar to "Bounce." A stimulating argument begins to emerge in this video that spans the commentary of her subsequent videos. This argument is between fans of Azalea and fans of Nicki Minaj. In the commentary, each artist's fans go back and forth with each other over who is the 'queen of rap.' Another theme that emerges is discussion of whether or not Azalea showed her nipples in the first few scenes

of this music video. The preoccupation with Azalea's body is consistent throughout the YouTube commentary. It will be further discussed in relation to Excerpt (6.5).

In the following excerpt, Excerpt (6.3), Commenter G defends Azalea against the 'haters.' G's comments were one of many in response to another commenter who, like G, felt that the comments in response to this video were unnecessarily negative:

Excerpt (6.3)

G: really haters? ya care about her color w0w that's dumb . i don't give a fuck if she's white ,brown,black so... what? the only thing i care about is her songs , and if she's OK _.i mean like if the comments suppose to be about the songs not about hips or nothing T_T [emoticon] I'm just saying that because i seen it recently and if you got something to say something mean you should keep it to your self because of course other people are gonna reply say mean things well duhhh and i don't think you want mean comments about you l_l [emoticon]

Commenter G points out that commentary should concern the music, not Azalea's race or her body. G is challenging the racial dimension of authenticity, arguing that the focus should not be on Azalea's race (and therefore not on her performance as a potential member of the hip-hop community) but instead should be on her songs. This is a salient point because, even in Azalea's interviews, people were concerned more about who Azalea is as a person (her relationships, her shopping habits, and her modeling career) rather than what she is doing musically. The wide-spread criticism of her because she is successful in a community that is predominantly Black and that is built on the struggles of the Black community has left little room for Azalea to be analyzed as a musician. In this response, which mimics a lot of other responses within this comment-reply chain, G points out that the focus has been misplaced. However, this is one of the few instances where comments like this are made. Instead, the majority of commentary in response to Azalea's music videos is focused on Azalea's identity within the hip-hop community.

This focus shows that many members of the hip-hop community cannot even begin to consider the value of Azalea's music or her talent as a musical artist until the issue of her (in)authenticity and position within the community is resolved. For the people commenting on this platform, her music videos serve a purpose in that they provide a place for this discussion to continue.

"Fancy": Hoodrats and Cultural Appropriation

"Fancy" was Azalea's first video to be released in 2014. Since its March release, "Fancy" has received over 500 million views, making it Azalea's most popular video to date. The commentary in response to "Fancy" was again predominantly negative, with three themes emerging: 'loss of the genre,' Azalea as a mixture of rap and pop music, and a comparison of Azalea and Eminem. The argument regarding the 'loss of the genre' emerges out of the belief that the old style of rap/hip-hop is far better than the music that is produced today. Comments such as "Bro hiphops dead, this isn't even rap anymore this is some other genre this generation of rappers seemed to create because old hiphop I listened to didn't sound horrible as this" were met with general agreement and spawned discussions of the second theme: criticism of Azalea's music for being, according to some of the commenters, a mixture of rap and pop. For instance, one commenter stated "Tupac […] wouldn't have dared let this filth even come near a record deal. Rap isn't Pop, and yet she utterly fucked up the genre. What's next for the music industry?" As seen in this comment, Azalea's blended style has caused some people to question her identity as a hip-hop artist. Finally, commenters compared Azalea to Eminem. Commenters attributed greater talent to Eminem and questioned why Azalea's videos were getting more views. Azalea brings up this exact issue in Excerpt (5.8), where she

states “I’d never expect them to like hail me like Eminem.” Azalea and her commenters seem to be in agreement as to who deserves more attention. Azalea does not pretend to have the same talent as Eminem; however, commenters still seem to have issues with her currently being more successful than him.

In Excerpt (6.4), the issue of cultural appropriation is revitalized; however, that is not the limit of Commenter H’s attack on Azalea. Through key arguments, Commenter H succinctly summarizes some hip-hop community members’ issues with Azalea:

Excerpt (6.4)

H: Haha Iggy’s deluisonal fans make me laugh. She a hoodrat, her whole image is fabricated, her lyrics that you all claim she "spits out" is made and written for her, the "hella millions" she makes is made though black appropriation. The only people who have respect for Iggy are 12 year old white girls- which by the way need to search up CULTURAL APPROPRIATION because you fans don't know shit.

While Commenter H’s overarching argument seems to focus on Azalea appropriating Black culture, lines 1-2 paint a different picture. The term ‘hoodrat’ refers to a slut who acts in scandalous manner to achieve a goal. By labeling Azalea a hoodrat, Commenter H accuses her of sleeping around and using her body to become famous. In this way, H constructs Azalea in a stereotypical fashion in terms of the gender-sexual dimension. The ‘hoodrat’ claim constructs Azalea as a loose woman who is willing to do anything to become successful; in other words, she has no talent outside of her ability to sleep her way to the top. This accusation is further substantiated by H’s second claim – that Azalea’s image is fabricated. This claim goes back to the cultural dimension of authenticity and the concept of authenticity in general. To be authentic in the general sense, one must not fabricate his/her identity. Commenter H argues that Azalea would not

need to use her body if she had any talent. This claim also argues that Azalea is not who she claims to be, meaning that she is not authentic in any sense of the word. Commenter H's third claim is that Azalea does not write her own lyrics. H also uses the term 'spits out' in line 2, which refers to the act of freestyling while rapping. H not only deconstructs the argument that Azalea is freestyling but argues that her lyrics are not even her own, further supporting the first claim that Azalea has no talent. With the addition of the appropriation claim, Commenter H effectively argues that Azalea has no place in hip-hop. According to H, Azalea has no talent and therefore has to sleep around to get ahead and what little she does have is what she has appropriated from Black culture.

"Black Widow": Sex Symbols and Sexualized Performance

"Black Widow" was Azalea's second most viewed music video, with 200 million views. Azalea released this video five months after Fancy in August 2014. The commentary for this video focused on two themes: the commenters' belief that Azalea is not a rapper and her 'fat ass'. The discussion surrounding the claim that Azalea is not a rapper was centered less on issues of cultural appropriation and more on this (somewhat strange) idea that what Azalea is doing is not rapping. Commenters made claims such as "this is not music, this is just softcore porn" and "she isn't a rapper…she's a plastic hoe." Azalea's sexuality, which she overtly promotes in her videos, directed commenters' attention to discussion of her body. In Excerpt (6.5), Commenter I discusses how it does not matter that Azalea's music is terrible because her body makes up for that fact:

Excerpt (6.5)

1 I: It's incredible that popular music has become so terrible. The only reasons this
2 shit makes money is because Iggy is a sex symbol, or your taste is actually bad
3 enough that you enjoy this. But hey, good for anyone involved in this money

making train wreck. You know why? Because it actually works. I came here to see Iggy's fat ass. That's one more view.
J: #judgingyou
K: when she turned around at the start of the song she looked like a fucking donkey,
L: I played this shitty song for the exact same reason and I'll do it again.
M: Yep. That's why all men and lesbians watch it. The video is sh*t.

The commenters' preoccupation with Azalea's body, to the point that they will watch her music video just to see her dance, shows how skewed the music industry (and its audience) have become. Commenter I creates two options for Azalea's fans: either they have bad enough taste that they enjoy her music or they enjoy her performances because she is a sex symbol. In Commenter I's mind, there is not situation in which people could enjoy Azalea's music for any other reason. Commenter J is the only one to disagree with I; however, the short '#judging you' can barely be considered a counterargument. Commenters J, K, and L agree with H's assessment, contributing their own vulgar adages. Azalea's body and sexuality are slowly becoming the sole focus for her viewers. Discussion of her music, talent, and (in)authenticity, while still matters worth discussing in the eyes of the commenters (as seen in Excerpt 6.6), are no longer dominating the conversation, as Azalea has attracted a whole new category of 'fans.' While in some ways this argument goes back to the hip-hop community's gender-sexual dimension of authenticity, these commenters' remarks signal a larger issue regarding society's construction of gender and sexuality, an issue that is unfortunately too large to be discussed within the scope of this paper.

"Beg for It": Race and Responding to Community Concerns

After two fairly explosive music videos, Azalea's final music video of 2014, "Beg for It," received only 11 million views, making it her least successful music video to date.

Released in November 2014, “Beg for It” was the only music video based on a song that was not on Azalea’s album. “Beg for It” was also a lyric video, which could have contributed to the limited number of views. A lyric video is a music video in which the artist is not present on screen. Instead, the lyrics flash on the screen in time to the music. The commentary in response to “Beg for It” encompassed many of the themes discussed in connection with Azalea’s previous videos. However, one theme that stuck out was accusations of racism. In Excerpt (6.6), Commenter N argues back and forth with multiple commenters in an exchange that lasts over 140 interactional turns. In this exchange, Commenter N accuses Azalea of being racist, appropriating black culture, and being a bitch:

Excerpt (6.6)

N: How the fuck does Piggy have fans tho? Besides her being untalented, do you guys not know she's racist and homophobic?
N: I know this is going to be long so either skim through it or read this: tl;dr [too long, didn’t read]: This bitch uses black culture only so she could succeed in the industry AND her entire career is solely based on the hard work that black artists have been building for decades, and she thinks that the problem faced by black people today doesn't relate to her? Thank god her 15 minutes of fame are almost up.
O: Oh my god, shut up. Literally you are so annoying and you have no idea what you're talking about. Rap isn't exclusive to black people for one. And two, why should she have to comment on Mike Brown's murder? Because she's a rapper? Eminem didn't say shit, but he's white. Are you gonna freak out about him? No, of course not. All you Iggy haters are the same. The door is over there, feel free to leave.
N: oh look what a surprise, another one of igloo's fans defending her racist appropriating ass. lmao I'm the one using logic here and I'm the stupid one apparently.. ok □□
P: Honestly if you don't like her why would you even come to this video? You know there's going to be people here who love her and what you say isn't going to change anything. Tbh there isn't a reason to come here just to hate on her here. If you want to hate on her you can i'm not trying to say she's the most perfect amazing girl ever and i'm not trying to make you angry but i really don't

understand why you would come here in the first place if you hate her as much as you do. Not everybody is going to like Iggy Azalea and her fans understand that she's hated but making her fans feel bad about something that they enjoy isn't going to help you or them in anyway.
N: Because I wanted to call her out and see how these Igloo fans would react. That's the funny part though, she's so problematic yet her fans would continue to defend her and act like it's no big deal or anything. I'm hating on her because she's racist, homophobic, and a bitch. If she wasn't any of those then I wouldn't have come here in the first place. I did not come here to call her untalented and overrated (even though she is) or to compare her to Nicki Minaj. She's hated by many people for a reason (again, she's racist!!). Racism is STILL a big problem today, and you guys are praising a racist.

Commenter N's primary issue with Azalea is that Azalea refused to comment on the police shooting of unarmed teenager Michael Brown. N's claim is that, since Azalea's career is based on the hard work of thousands of black hip-hop artists, she should speak about issues about which the hip-hop community is concerned. N argues in lines 4-8 that Azalea acts as if 'the problem,' referring to racial tensions in America, does not affect her, despite the fact that she is attempting to become a member of a community in which race is a central identity feature. This is where N gets her evidence for his/her claim that Azalea is racist (line 2 and line 35). Commenters O and P are a sample of the many people who responded to N's original comment. Commenter O argues that Azalea should not have to comment on the Michael Brown case. O argues in line 10 that "Rap isn't exclusive to black people," meaning that Black American culture and hip-hop culture are no longer directly connected. In lines 11-13, Commenter O extends his/her argument by bringing up Eminem, who also did not comment on the case. O argues that N believes that Azalea should comment on the case, when Azalea is simply one of the many rappers who stayed silent. Commenter P then questions why Commenter N is even commenting on this video. In lines 24-26, P makes a thought-provoking claim, stating that there is no

expectation that Azalea will be liked or accepted by everyone; however, those who do not like her should not feel entitled to make Azalea's fans feel bad for liking Azalea. Azalea's fans get enjoyment out of listening to her, and her 'haters' do not gain anything by spreading their displeasure. This is an intriguing argument in that it brings up the possibility that Azalea could be loved and accepted in a community that may or may not intersect with the hip-hop community. Azalea's success is not necessarily conditional on her acceptance in the hip-hop community.

Commenter N's response has a degree of righteousness in it. N argues in lines 30-32 that the issue has nothing to do with Azalea's skill as an artist. Instead, N hates Azalea because N believes that she is racist; therefore, how much her fans enjoy her should not matter. Commenter N also calls Azalea homophobic, a bitch, untalented, and overrated. N's hatred for Azalea is clear despite her attempt to claim that she is just trying to show everyone the 'truth' about Azalea, arguing in lines 32-33 that Azalea is "hated by many people for a reason." N uses the term 'problematic' in line 28 to describe Azalea. This term seems fitting in that, despite the hundreds of thousands of words devoted to the subject of Azalea, the argument about whether she is (in)authentic and/or (un)talented will not rest.

Macklemore

At the time of data collection, Macklemore had released nine music videos on YouTube[5], spanning from January 2011 to August 2014. Like the commentary in

[5] Only seven of Macklemore's nine music videos will be analyzed. "Victory Lap," which was released in April 2012, only received 6 million views and produced no comments that pertained to Macklemore's position in hip-hop community. "Fences," which was released in August 2014, only received 5 million views and similarly produced no useable comments, as Macklemore was not the primary artist on the record.

response to Azalea's videos, Macklemore's videos received both positive and negative comments, although the negative comments were not quite as vitriolic as the ones in response to Azalea's videos. There were a lot of positive comments, such as "this song is catchy af. the beat is addicting. i remember the day this came out, it was such a hit" and "Best song ever!" However, there were also numerous negative comments, such as "The fuck are they wearing? Is this some new badass gangster thing? He looks like he beat a hipster to death with a pimp and dressed himself in the remains" and "how can this crap be called music?" However, while the negative comments in response to Azalea's videos were often personally derogatory, the negative comments in response to Macklemore's videos seem to focus more on the music itself and Macklemore's abilities as a rapper. Like the interviews, the level of conversation differs for Macklemore and Azalea. While many hip-hop fans cannot seem to move past Azalea's position as a sex symbol, Macklemore's fans are more interested in his music. Table 6.2 shows the themes and semantic dimensions of authenticity that are present within the commentary in response to Macklemore's videos. As is evident in the table, race, culture, and selling out proved to be the most important themes in the commentary, as commenters attempt to come to terms with Macklemore as a musical artist, as a white male, and as a potential member of the hip-hop community.

Table 6.2: Themes/dimensions of authenticity in Macklemore's YouTube commentary

Song	Commentary Themes	McLeod's Dimension(s)
My Oh My	Musical talent, race	Socio-psychological, racial
Otherside	Race, selling out	Political-economic, racial

Table 6.2 (continued)

Song	Commentary Themes	McLeod's Dimension(s)
Thrift Shop	Staying true to the self, selling out	Socio-psychological
Same Love	Race, culture, politics, gendered performance	Gender-sexual, racial, cultural
Can't Hold Us	Race, racism, culture	Socio-psychological, racial
White Walls	Multiculturalism, culture, place of origin	Socio-locational, racial, cultural

In the following analysis, the major themes of commentary for each video are examined, as well as excerpts from the most linguistically and thematically interesting comment-reply chains in response to Macklemore's music videos.

"My Oh My": Rapping Talent and White Privilege

Macklemore's first music video, "My Oh My" was released in January 2011. At the time of data collection, the video had received 14 million views. "My Oh My" was part of Macklemore's first album, *The Heist*. The commentary in response to this video focused almost entirely on the content of the video. This could be due to the fact that "My Oh My" is a tribute to Seattle Mariners broadcaster Dave Niehaus. Therefore, most of the commenters were Seattle Mariners fans who seemed to care more about their team than they do about Macklemore. However, there were still a few comments that focused on Macklemore as a hip-hop artist. In Excerpt (6.7), Commenters Q and R discuss Macklemore as a rapper:

Excerpt (6.7)

1 Q: Shame that Macklemore hit it big on Thrift Shop rather than the songs that he
2 was the most passionate about. Don't get me wrong, I love Macklemore, I just
3 wish he got recognition for the songs he cared about like this one.

R: This song and "The Town" are the only two songs I like from Macklemore. He just talks the whole time in "Wings". The rest of his songs are just mainstream bullshit (can't blame him for going for the money). But he is a good spoken word poet but he's not really a rapper. Yes, I am bringing up Eminem because he's another white rapper but thats only because so many others compare them. Em is truly a great rapper, because he has different flows and actually has great rhythm to add to his deep, heartfelt poetry. I'm born and raised in Seattle and LOVE Mariners baseball. But come on, everyone (even Macklemore) knows Kendrick Lamar should have won that Grammy with his instant classic/masterpiece "Good Kid M.A.A.D City". Just an opinion don't get all butthurt in the comments about my taste. I've met Macklemore and he's a great and down-to-earth guy but his music really shouldn't be called "the future of rap" because if he had been black, he would be considered "just another rapper".

Commenters Q and R represent two sides of the argument regarding Macklemore's position in the hip-hop community. Commenter Q believes that Macklemore should get recognition for "the songs he cared about" instead of what Commenter R calls in lines 5-6 "mainstream bullshit." For Commenter Q, Macklemore is not recognized for the songs that really matter, songs that more accurately represent Macklemore, a claim that goes back to the socio-psychological dimension of authenticity. Meanwhile Commenter R does not believe that Macklemore is even a rapper (lines 6-7). R argues that, in comparison to Eminem and Kendrick Lamar, Macklemore is not as talented. Commenter R also bring race into the matter in lines 15-16, when R states that if Macklemore was black, he would be considered 'just another rapper,' meaning that Macklemore's whiteness is the only reason that he is successful. For Commenter R, Eminem represents true talent that transcends his race, unlike Macklemore. In lines 11-13, R evens bring up the fact that Macklemore has admitted that Lamar should have won the Grammy for best rap album. In a sense, Commenter R's argument boils down to the fact that Macklemore is simply not talented enough for the amount of fame that he has received. It is oddly his

inauthenticity according to the racial dimension that has helped him to become so successful. One thing to note is that R phrases this argument in a much more respectful manner than arguments regarding Azalea. By stating “Just an opinion don't get all butthurt in the comments” in line 13, R attempts to rise above the petty arguments that so often occur in YouTube commentary, hedging his argument with the claim that this is ‘just his opinion.’ Although R’s comment does inspire responses, the responses avoid the strong vitriol that characterized the comments in response to Azalea’s videos.

“Otherside”: Race and Selling Out

Macklemore’s second music video, “Otherside,” was released seven months after “My Oh My” in August 2011. “Otherside” did significantly better than “My Oh My,” receiving 39 million views. The YouTube commentary in response to “Otherside” featured two main themes: the content’s effect on the viewers and Macklemore as the ‘only rapper’ that viewers know or care about. Excerpt (6.8) is a small sample of an exchange that lasted over 170 interactional turns. The main commenter, Commenter S, argues that one has to listen to more than Eminem and Macklemore in order to consider oneself a fan of hip-hop:

Excerpt (6.8)

S: Man, all these white people thinking they know what Hip Hop/Rap is. When all you listen to is not Eminem and Wacklemore and you actually understand Hip Hop Culture, the history and the sub genres within it, then you can claim to be a "hip hop fan"
T: Yeah, I enjoy Macklemore because his lyrics have actual meaning, and if he's not being serious when rapping, his lyrics are usually uplifting and don't contain sex, violence, and drugs like many other rap songs. Other rap songs have absolutely no meaning whatsoever.
S: So basically, you are iignorantto other rappers who do not rap about sex, violence and drugs. The genre of rap has many sub genres within it, such as trap, Chicago Drill, Hardcore Rap, GFunk, Gangsta Rap, etc, etc. Also, other rap songs

don't have meaning? […] saying that "other rap songs have absolutely no meaning whatsoever" is like me saying that Rock is all devil worshiping screamo drum bashing, that Country is all hill billy racist music and that electronic is just WUB WUB WUB WUB. It is ignorant, stupid and quite frankly retarded.
U: I'm white. My favorite Hip Hop artists are: Big L, Shyheim, Wu-tang, Big Pun, Yelawolf, MF doom, Slug, Pac. Don't be so Biased/Judgmental. Creativity is colorless. The sooner you take your guards down to race..The sooner you sire will be a true Hip Hop fan. Peace.
S: Being a true hip hop fan is knowing the culture and the different sub genres and history within it. Also, I am not literally saying all white people aren't actually fans of hip hop, I'm saying a large amount that claim they listen to rap but only listen to the radio hits and then claim that "all rap is about sex, violence and money" like [T and other commenters]. Which is quite true, as hip hop/rap is historically and still is a predominantly Afro-American art form/culture. Also, creativity might colorless, but the way people see creativity/art forms that they are not inclined or familiar with is [not] colorless.

Excerpt (6.8) begins as a racialized discussion. Commenter S's use of the phrase 'all these white people' in line 1 creates an argument in which white people listen to Eminem and Macklemore; therefore, white people do not understand hip-hop culture and are not true hip-hop fans. Commenter S is also claiming that Eminem and Macklemore are not real hip-hop artists because, if they were, then real hip-hop fans would listen to them. S also replaces 'Macklemore' with 'Wacklemore' in line 2, perhaps indicating that Macklemore is so ludicrous as a rapper that this new name is better fitting. Commenter T's response, however, is no less close-minded than S's. By stating in lines 5-8 that Macklemore's songs have actual meaning, whereas all other rap songs do not, T seems to be proving Commenter S's point. T has disregarded the value of all other rap songs, arguing that Macklemore's songs are the only ones that do not talk about sex, violence, and drugs. T is constructs him/herself, even if unwittingly, as one of those close-minded fans that S was referencing. Commenter S calls T out on this, calling T ignorant in line 9. S then proceeds to lecture T on the many subgenres that exist within rap. Finally, S shows

that stereotypes such as the one T used exist for all genres of music, calling the stereotypes “ignorant, stupid and quite frankly retarded” in line 15.

However T is not the only one to respond to Commenter S. Commenter U calls S out for his/her racist argument. U, who claims to be a white hip-hop fan, attempts to show S that white fans can be educated about the culture and artists by listing all of his/her favorite artists. It is curious that all of U’s favorite artists happen to be black. Despite U’s intentions, U is making a racialized comment also. U seems to equate ‘knowledge of hip-hop’ with ‘knowledge of black artists’ because, as S noted, knowledge of white hip-hop artist does not count as ‘real’ knowledge of hip-hop. U’s unintentional alignment with S’s argument seems to show that, no matter how talented Macklemore may be, according to these fans, he can never represent ‘real’ hip-hop because ‘real’ hip-hop is black. However, U does not recognize the hole in his/her argument, instead arguing in lines 18-19 that “The sooner you [S] take your guards down to race..The sooner you sire will be a true Hip Hop fan.” Commenter U seems to be making the argument that race should not be factor when discussing hip-hop, that fans should not be stereotyped because of their race. However, race is still very much a part of his/her argument, despite his/her intentions.

Commenter S’s final turn in Excerpt (6.8) complicates the argument by adding mainstream versus underground rap to an argument about race. This transition is seen in lines 21-24, where S states that true hip-hop fans do not get their knowledge of hip-hop from the radio, nor do true hip-hop fans think that “all rap is about sex, violence and money,” which goes back to Commenter T’s response (and other commenters not listed in this excerpt). S’s final argument in lines 24-27 is a bit confusing. S claims that hip-hop

is still predominantly ‘Afro-American;’ however, creativity is colorless, meaning not bound by race. The people who bring race into the equation, according to Commenter S, are those who are not familiar with the art form, in this case hip-hop. S’s argument therefore seems to be that Macklemore is too white (racial dimension) and too mainstream (political-economic dimension) to be considered an authentic member of the hip-hop community.

“And We Danced”: The Act of Rapping versus Being a Rapper

“And We Danced” was Macklemore’s final music video to be released in 2011. It was released just two months after “Otherside,” in October 2011. Macklemore’s popularity seems to be growing, as this video received 85 million views. Like “Otherside,” “And We Danced” was not a part of Macklemore’s album. There were two main themes in the commentary in response to “And We Danced”: questions about whether the video is supposed to be satirical and comments that the video is too mainstream and fun. This was Macklemore’s first video that did not appear to have a deeper meaning, as “My Oh My” was a tribute song and “Otherside” talked about overcoming drug abuse. Instead, “And We Danced” is about dancing and having a good time. In Excerpt (6.9), five commenters discuss how hip-hop has changed and how Macklemore is, in their eyes, not a rapper:

Excerpt (6.9)

V: Why aren't these 'rappers' today, rapping?
W: No depth, intelligence, flow, meaning, passion....And all about business...
X: he's not a rapper he's a singer
V: oh, ok Riff Raff [another white rapper] is a clown too...very little ability and cheap...That's what I think..
Y: Some of his other stuff is deep...
V: I hope to really God he has stuff that is deep...hope after all...a generation of

8 lil' wayne followers think he's great […]
9 Z: he's not a rapper. he can rap(in fact he does it) but s not a rapper some people
10 think are the same. same kind of people that not differences rap of hip hop culture
11 or the ones who doesn't know the disco roots of the rap (MC HAMMER and
12 stuff) he is a pop/dance singer and he raps that all folks

Commenter V posts the question, "Why aren't these 'rappers' today, rapping?," to the group. By putting quotation marks around 'rappers,' V argues that, while Macklemore may call himself a rapper, he really is not one and what he is doing is not rapping. Commenter W responds that rappers are no longer rapping because they lack "depth, intelligence, flow, meaning, passion" and only care about business. This goes back to the political-economic dimension. The commenter is indirectly calling out Macklemore for going mainstream, even though, at this point, Macklemore is not very famous or mainstream. Commenter X then responds in line 3, saying that Macklemore is a singer, not a rapper, which is a note-worthy claim in itself. Commenter X is disqualifying Macklemore as a member of the hip-hop community and attributing him to another community entirely. This is an odd claim in that, despite how talented (or not talented) viewers may think Macklemore is, Macklemore never once sings on his record, making X's complete rejection of Macklemore as a rapper seem a bit over the top.

Commenter V then responds back in lines 4-5, grouping Riff Raff and Macklemore together, calling them cheap and lacking talent. It is curious that these two artists would be compared, considering Riff Raff is known to be a white, over-the-top, wannabe gangster rapper, whereas Macklemore is nothing of the sort. However, because they are both white, V groups them together. Commenter Y attempts to defend Macklemore, noting that some of Macklemore's other songs are deep, which causes V to respond a bit more positively in lines 7-8. V obviously does not know Macklemore's

music, which could be why he was judged so harshly in the first part of the excerpt. Commenter Z, however, returns to the argument that Macklemore is not a rapper, again challenging Macklemore's position in the hip-hop community. Z states that Macklemore does rap; however, what he does is an action, not a signifier of the wider rap (or hip-hop) culture. In a sense, Commenter Z is arguing that, no matter how Macklemore acts or how talented a rapper he may be, he will never be part of the hip-hop community, although Z never truly articulates why.

"Thrift Shop": Wannabe Rappers and Staying True to Oneself

"Thrift Shop" was Macklemore's most successful music video by far. Released a year after "And We Danced," in August 2012, "Thrift Shop" received 676 million views, making it almost as successful as Azalea's two most successful music videos put together. "Thrift Shop," like "And We Danced," was a frivolous and fun music video that talked about shopping at thrift shops. It is not surprising that most of the commenters talked about shopping at thrift shops because doing so was very popular at the time. However, a few commenters wondered about a deeper meaning. In Excerpt (6.10), three commenters discuss whether Macklemore was being satirical or straightforward in this song:

Excerpt (6.10)

AA: This song is obviously making fun of all the wannabe rappers of today talking about how they spend so much cash on things they don't need and how they act stupid in clubs like his reference "i walk into a club like what up i got a big cock" something an idiot would say...Mainstream music is just trash if you ask me. I would consider searching for other artists
AB: I'm pretty sure this song meaning closely resembles that of The Offspring's "Pretty Fly". It's making fun of upper middle class whiteboys that adopt an urban hip hop culture to seem "cool", even though they know nothing of the financial hardships and social injustice derived from true urban hip hop culture. Another

10 interpretation of this song might just be that it is an anthem for hipsters. Or I
11 could just be an asshole that doesn't know what the fuck I'm talking about.
12 AC: Dude is literally talking about doing his shopping at the goodwill because
13 "$50 for a Tshirt is some ignorant bitch shit." It can't get more simpler than that.

Commenter AA seems to contradict him/herself in lines 1-5. First, AA states that "Thrift Shop" is making fun of 'wannabe rappers' who throw around money to show how successful they are. AA then quotes a line in the song, stating that it is 'something an idiot would say;' however, it is unclear whether Macklemore is the idiot or whether Macklemore is making fun of idiots who say things like that. Finally, AA states that mainstream music is trash and suggests that fellow commenters should search for other artists. This argument, like S's argument in Excerpt (6.8) goes back to the political-economic dimension of authenticity. Macklemore is too mainstream to be worth listening to according to AA, which is why AA comments that people should look for other hip-hop artists. AA clearly does not like the 'wannabe rappers' that Macklemore may or may not be making fun of, but AA also does not seem to like Macklemore either. AA may be trying to claim that Macklemore is one of the wannabe rappers. Either way, AA clearly sees no value in mainstream music and would therefore probably not consider Macklemore an authentic member of the hip-hop community because he contributes to the 'mainstream trash.'

Commenter AB seems similarly confused. AB creates two options for this song: either Macklemore is making fun of urban white boys who appropriate hip-hop culture but who are clearly inauthentic in terms of the cultural (and possibly racial) dimension or Macklemore simply wrote an anthem for hipsters, who are known for following trends. AB does not pretend to know the answer to this question, which might be why

Commenter AC responds in a matter of fact manner in lines 12-13, stating that the song is a simple narrative. Macklemore shops at thrift shops because things in regular stores are too expensive. It is fascinating that these commenters connect the meaning of the song with Macklemore's identity as a hip-hop artist. If Macklemore is creating music to please the public, 'anthems for hipsters' as AB calls it, then he more than likely inauthentic. However, if Macklemore is criticizing such frivolous wannabes then perhaps he may be more authentic than he appears to be in this song.

"Same Love": Race, History, and Politics

"Same Love," which was discussed by Macklemore and Charlamagne in Excerpt (5.10), was published in October 2012, two months after the release of "Thrift Shop." This controversial music video received 136 million views. Since "Same Love" depicted homosexuality in a positive light, the primary theme of the commentary in response to the video was gay marriage rights, with a rather equal divide between those who supported gay marriage rights and therefore loved the song and those who supported traditional marriage rights and therefore were either uncomfortable with the song or outright did not like it. Underneath the political commentary however, the argument regarding Macklemore's position in hip-hop continues. In Excerpts (6.11) and (6.12) (divided due to length and subject matter), two commenters argue over this matter, extending the argument to white people in general:

Excerpt (6.11)

1 AD: Ok you know what, enough is enough. I can dig a new beat like anyone but
2 this a joke. Since when was it up to white people to decide where hip hop should
3 go?? These people really cross the line and it bothers me cause y'all let the shit go
4 unchecked. This fucking vanilla army waving banners like they're the forefront of
5 the black struggle, quit playin. The only reason this is being put out, is cause hip

hop is being taken over by the homosexual agenda. I mean, what does black oppression have to do with being gay? Two completely separate struggles, and gay people weren't marching with you when you were getting beat down and being chewed out by dogs. So what is this really all about? Ask yourselves
AE: The cognitive dissonance is amazing. If you attack racism, and you're not of the race you're defending, then you're a "vanilla army". If you ignore racism, you're a racist. You cannot have it both ways. If you're going to bring race into it, and you want to "further you race", some white people are going to have to agree with you, that's just the nature of it. I feel like people like you don't really want "your race to progress", because it's such an easy soundbyte/excuse/ace in the hole to have on a daily basis.

Commenter AD's argument in his first comment (lines 1-9) is that 'white people' (meaning Macklemore and other white rappers like him) should not make music that leads hip-hop in a new direction, a clear connection to the racial dimension of authenticity. AD refers to this group of white people as 'this fucking vanilla army,' who are now the face of the 'black struggle.' AD is further angered by Macklemore singing about gay rights, as the 'homosexual agenda' is a separate struggle from 'black oppression.' Because gay people were not overtly supporting black people when they were struggling for equal rights, their struggle should not be voiced by members of the hip-hop community. Macklemore, being white, could be seen as part of AD's 'fucking vanilla army,' which would mean that he is using hip-hop as a vehicle to further his own agenda in AD's mind. However, if AD does not see Macklemore as part of the vanilla army then AD's issue may be with Macklemore, as a potential hip-hop community member, singing about issues that do not pertain to the community. Either way, this could open Macklemore up to claims of inauthenticity according to the cultural dimension, as Macklemore does not seem to be valuing the history and traditions associated with the community by focusing on non-community based issues.

AE displays a similar amount of anger as AD when responding; however, AE is on the opposite side of the argument. AE argues in lines 10-12 that one cannot simultaneously argue that one must be part of the struggle to discuss it and that if one is not part of the struggle but does not discuss the struggle then that person is racist. In effect, one cannot ask for everyone to discuss the struggle but then criticize those who are not directly connected to the struggle for discussing it. AE argues that there must be some agreement outside of the group involved for things to change. This could be an argument for Macklemore's position in hip-hop. According to AE, 'white people are going to have to agree,' which means that, because Macklemore is involved in the hip-hop community, the community has a greater chance of overcoming racism and other issues that affect them. While this argument makes sense up until this point, AE then makes a controversial claim in lines 14-16 that 'people like you,' meaning Commenter AD, do not want things to change but simply want something about which to complain.

The conversation then turns to where Macklemore fits in hip-hop as a potential member. The commenters discuss whether he can change the direction of the community and his capacity as an innovator:

Excerpt (6.12)

AD: Any house that welcomes you inside, should humble you as you enter. As a guest essentially you're restricted to just the living room and the bathroom, correct? You don't then walk in, sit down, throw your coat on the floor and put your feet up. I credit you with the intelligence to understand what I mean by that at least. […] Back to my main point here before this gets too ugly, is that hip hop is essentially black, it's our vehicle. All cultures want to highlight their accomplishments, what's wrong with that? I take issue with the fact that things created by Black people are always appropriated by everybody else, a practice that has taken place, in music in particular. So when people like Macklemore, a guest of hip hop, comes in and thinks he can dictate what direction it should go in. I'm gonna have something to say, OK

AE: I just find this incredibly silly. This is like saying Hendrix was "A guest of rock and roll, so he should follow the rules set down by his white counterparts." No, fuck that. Imagine if Hendrix sold out to a certain kind of preapproved "sound" or "direction" of the genre instead of coming in and tearing shit up like he did, that would have been a fucking tragedy. I'm not comparing Hendrix to Macklemore in ANY capacity, but it's the mentality of "This is a black thing, you have your white things, if you're going to bring your white things into our black things, we're going to resent you." that bothers me. Music should be one of the main things that brings us together, not segregates us into "black" and "white" genres.
AD: No, as I've already said; I resent the fact that whenever It comes to black inventions, they're always appropriated by other people, case in point. This notion that hiphop MUST recognise the LBGT movement, when it had absolutely nothing to do with hiphops making. So made an issue, that because Macklemore didn't create hip hop, it's not his place to dictate which direction the hip hop genre should go in, which it isn't. At no point does that translate to "You're not welcome in the club, because you don't fit the racial profile" you prove my point exactly by saying music is music, it wasn't designed to fit into a specific criteria or a demographic, I agree no genre is reserved to one race but at least have the proper respect for its history.

It is evident from Commenter AD's use of 'our' in line 6 when he/she states "it's our vehicle" that he/she is black, a fact that in some ways strengthens AD's argument in Excerpt (6.11) and (6.12). Since AD is part of those experiencing 'black oppression' (lines 6-7), it makes sense that he/she would be so territorial about Macklemore's place in the community.

Commenter AD makes two points in his/her response to AE: (1) guests in hip-hop (or other spheres) should not attempt to dictate the direction in which the sphere moves artistically (lines 1-5) and (2) hip-hop is a black culture that has been appropriated by everyone else; black artists should maintain control over the culture despite who appropriates it (lines 5-11). AD's first argument centers on Macklemore's position in hip-hop as a guest. As a guest, AD argues, Macklemore should not feel as if he has free license to do whatever he wants, that he should restrict himself to actions deemed

appropriate by the hip-hop community, essentially living within the confines of McLeod's semantic dimensions without receiving recognition for his authentic performance. What Commenter AD is really taking issue with is the fact that Macklemore is rapping about homosexuality, an act which violates the gender-sexual dimension. AD is accusing Macklemore here of taking hip-hop in a direction that it does not want to go and that it has historically shunned. AD's second argument is an extension of the racial argument that was made earlier. According to AD, as a white person (essentially violating the racial dimension of authenticity), Macklemore cannot authentically produce hip-hop music. Instead, he must appropriate the genre, essentially stealing from the black community. Because he is guilty of appropriation in AD's mind, Macklemore has no authority whatsoever in the community, if he truly has a place in it at all in AD's mind.

Commenter AE's response urges AD to see past the idea of segregated art forms. AE brings up Jimi Hendrix as an example. At the time, some listeners may have considered Hendrix a guest in rock and roll; however, that did not stop Hendrix from completely changing the direction of the genre and revolutionizing music as a whole. AE hedges this claim in lines 16-17, when he/she states "I'm not comparing Hendrix to Macklemore in ANY capacity," meaning that AE is not trying to make a talent or skill-based argument. Instead, AE argues in lines 19-21 that music should bring people together instead of further segregating them. Essentially, Macklemore should have just as much say in the direction of hip-hop as other artists, despite racial differences.

However, Commenter AD refuses to listen to AE's argument, instead firing back a comment that in many ways repeats what was said in earlier comments. However, in

lines 30-31, AD adds a new and perhaps critical dimension to the argument, by bringing up the cultural dimension of authenticity. AD argues that Macklemore is not respecting the history of hip-hop by rapping about homosexuality. If Macklemore was authentic according to the cultural dimension, essentially knowing the history and traditions of hip-hop, he would not have rapped about homosexuality, an issue that is often avoided by many members of the hip-hop community.

"Can't Hold Us": Racism and Themes in Rap

Six months after the controversial release of "Same Love," Macklemore released "Can't Hold Us" in April 2013. This video, an upbeat anthem of success, received 295 million views and an overwhelmingly positive response in the comments. While some negative comments were still present, for the most part, the commentary expressed love for this song. This love has consequences for some, however. Those who attempted to claim that Macklemore (or white rappers in general) is better than black rappers, like Commenter AF did in Excerpt (6.13), were attacked by numerous other commenters, who shouted accusations of racism:

Excerpt (6.13)

AF: There are more black rappers but the white ones are better. Eminem en Macklemore are legends of music
AG: That's just not true. I know nothing about rap so I can't name names, but I would think that Macklemore and Eminem just got as famous as they did because, well, white people buy their music. White artists almost always get more exposure. I would be willing to bet there are hundreds of black rappers that are as good and better than these guys. Not to say Macklemore and Eminem aren't good they are. But please don't say they're better than black rappers. That's so fucked up.
AF: Im not racist but this is my opinion and all the songs of they is about drugs etc
AH: You're right, that's not racist, it's ignorant. Go listen to a few rappers before

you make those snap judgments. Most good songs involving drugs are about overcoming drug addiction, or standing tall in the face of a society that seems to not care whether the poor live, or shoot heroin until they die. Many are actually quite inspiring. I'd direct you towards Kendrick Lamar's "Swimming Pools (Drank)" for an example of a well-done R&B about drugs and the self-loathing of drug addiction.

Commenter AF's first claim in lines 1-2 is blatantly racist. AG's response to AF is particularly interesting because AG does not construct him/herself a member of the hip-hop community. AG instead makes an argument centered on the how an artist's race equates to specific types of treatment and exposure by the music industry. AG argues in lines 3-7 that Macklemore and Eminem are so famous because they are white; therefore, white people buy their music and they get preferential treatment from the music industry. AG does not attempt to negate Macklemore or Eminem's talent; instead, AG argues that there are "hundreds of black rappers that are as good and better than these guys," who are not known because of their race. AG finishes by stating that it is 'fucked up' to say that Macklemore and Eminem are better than black rappers.

It is important to point out that, when discussing white rappers, the name most often paired together with the artist being discussed is Eminem. This is perhaps due to the fact that Eminem is arguably the most famous and successful white rapper to date. However, it could also be due to the fact that Eminem has been accepted by the majority of the hip-hop community for years; therefore, by pairing his name with the name of other artists still working towards acceptance, the artist being discussed, in this case Macklemore or Azalea, seems more legitimate or authentic.

Commenter AF responds to AG, claiming that he/she is not racist. However, AF then utilizes another stereotype in an attempt to support his/her failing argument. AF

states “all the songs of they [sic] is about drugs,” expressing what could objectively be labeled ignorance regarding the hip-hop community and their music. A third commenter, Commenter AH, then responds to AF’s latest claim, calling AF out on his/her ignorance. In lines 13-16, AH details themes of resilience found in what AH claims are the ‘good songs’ in hip-hop. AH attempts to overthrow the common stereotype (detailed in Excerpt (6.8) as well) that hip-hop music is about drugs, violence, and sex by bringing up common alternative themes, such as resisting society’s nonchalance towards those in need. While this argument drifts away from a discussion of Macklemore’s value in hip-hop, he is not completely absent. Commenters AG and AH do not attempt to discard Macklemore because of his race. AG does not dislike Macklemore because of his privilege nor does AG attempt to say that Macklemore is less talented because of his race. AG carefully hedges his/her comment, ensuring that neither group is disrespected. Similarly, AH focuses solely on the content. ‘Good songs,’ according to AH, are those that dispel the stereotypes surrounding hip-hop music. Macklemore’s songs, including “Can’t Hold Us,” utilize the themes discussed in AH’s comment, meaning that, according to AH, they would be considered the ‘good’ songs of hip-hop.

“White Walls”: Multiculturalism and the Suburbs

“White Walls” was Macklemore’s last music video of September 2013. Not nearly as popular as “Can’t Hold Us,” with only 38 million views, “White Walls” was far less serious and political than some of Macklemore’s previous songs. The commenters noticed this, some expressing their enjoyment of “the best fucking video I've ever see[n].” In Excerpt (6.14), two commenters discuss their opinions regarding Macklemore’s multiculturalism:

Excerpt (6.14)

AK: Man I love Macklemore. Not only does he address serious current problems in our society with his music, he also makes fun kinda pointless songs like this. And his videos always include different types of people. Instead of just beautiful skinny white girls, he also has old, young, short, tall, black, white, all types of people. It's lovely.
AL: Macklemore lives in the Whitest large city in the USA. Loaded with the same Liberals who love multiculturalism, yet not enough to live like the rest of us who do.

Commenter AK likes both sides of Macklemore's music, both the serious and the 'fun kinda pointless songs.' AK also points out the blended nature of Macklemore's videos. Instead of videos filled with people who all look the same, Macklemore utilizes "old, young, short, tall, black, white, all types of people." While AK sees this multiculturalism as something positive, representative of perhaps larger political or social ideals on Macklemore's part that could benefit the community, AL sees Macklemore's multiculturalism as an act. AL begins by calling Macklemore out for coming from "the Whitest large city in the USA," referring to Seattle, which Macklemore references in the music video. This remark goes back to the socio-locational dimension of authenticity. Despite the fact that Macklemore is being honest about coming from 'the suburbs' rather than the streets, which would mean that he is staying true to himself (the socio-psychological dimension), the fact that Macklemore came from 'the suburbs' is in itself detrimental, a violation of the socio-locational dimension. AL furthers this argument by stating that Seattle is "[l]oaded with the same Liberals who love multiculturalism, yet not enough to live like the rest of us who do." This goes back to the cultural dimension. In AL's mind, Macklemore is violating this dimension because he is using these progressive ideas as a commodity to further his own career. According to AL, Macklemore values

multiculturalism as an idea but does not value it enough to do anything about it. What is missing for Commenter AL is a degree of activism that extends past the music.

Discussion

The level of scrutiny that Macklemore and Azalea's music videos receive within the comment sections of their music videos is astounding. It shows how seriously some fans and members of the hip-hop community value the authenticity of the artists to which they listen. A number of McLeod's dimensions of hip-hop authenticity, as well as other issues, were discussed in regards to Macklemore and Azalea. For Azalea, commenters originally had concerns regarding her accent. However, this conversation soon morphed into a discussion of Azalea's body, claims of racism and cultural appropriation, and ultimately her position in the hip-hop community and the music industry at large. In the "Work" commentary, commenters argued that Azalea violated the political-economic dimension of authenticity because she crafted a performance that would earn her mainstream success but that was not authentic. This argument also feeds into the socio-psychological dimension, which commenters argued Azalea violated by not presenting herself as she truly is, instead adopting an accent that was clearly not her own, a violation of the linguistic dimension of authenticity. In "Bounce" commentary, commenters argued that Azalea was violating the cultural dimension by not honoring the traditions and history of the culture she was representing. What was perhaps most consistently commented on in response to Azalea's videos was the gender-sexual dimension of authenticity. Commenters were intensely preoccupied with Azalea's body and her performance as a woman. In "Black Widow" and "Fancy" commentary in particular, commenters were consumed with how Azalea presented herself as a female hip-hop

artist, her oversexualized performances earning her both criticism and praise from commenters. Finally, there were numerous accusations of racism and cultural appropriation. Despite the numerous themes and styles presented in Azalea's music videos, commenters could not seem to move past these two issues, consistently arguing that Azalea was not accurately representing or in some cases outright stealing the practices of cultures or communities to which she does not belong.

Macklemore, while also criticized, was arguably better received than Azalea. Many commenters seemed more critical of racism in the music industry in general, rather than of Macklemore himself. Commentary in response to "My Oh My" and "Can't Hold Us" specifically talked about white privilege in the music industry; however, neither blamed Macklemore for taking advantage of said privilege. Macklemore was, however, criticized in terms of McLeod's semantic dimensions. Macklemore was accused of being inauthentic because of his race multiple times; however, this argument consistently received rebuttals. Arguments regarding the political-economic dimension, for instance in response to "Otherside," were more difficult to refute. Because of Macklemore's position as a mainstream artist, commenters criticized him for selling-out. In "Thrift Shop" and "Can't Hold Us," commenters discussed Macklemore's authenticity according to the socio-psychological dimension. Commenters questioned whether Macklemore was writing 'anthems for hipsters' in "Thrift Shop," which would be inauthentic, while Macklemore was indirectly praised in response to "Can't Hold Us" for writing songs with themes of resilience. The gender-sexual dimension was discussed also; however, the conversation was neither as sexist nor as degrading as the ones in response to Azalea's videos. Instead, commenters called Macklemore out for rapping about homosexuality,

which has been for the most part ignored by many members of the hip-hop community until recently. His political ballad caused commenters to question whether Macklemore was trying to shape the future of hip-hop, which for some violated the cultural dimension because, in doing so, Macklemore would not be honoring the traditions and history of the predominantly black community. Finally, the socio-location dimension was discussed in reference to Macklemore's "White Walls," where a commenter called Macklemore out for being from the suburbs of Seattle rather than being from the streets.

This blend of positive and critical comments in response to Macklemore and Azalea's music videos shows that the community is still for the most part divided on the issue of the artists' authenticity as potential members in the hip-hop community. The commentary provided a much needed perspective to this analysis, as it demonstrated how members of the hip-hop community and fans in general contribute to the discussion of Macklemore and Azalea's authenticity within the hip-hop community.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As is evident in the data analysis, Azalea's and Macklemore's attempts to construct authentic identities within the hip-hop discourse community are neither uniform nor consistent. In some instances, the artists seem to effectively construct themselves as members, and fellow members of the hip-hop community affirm this construction; however, in other instances, Azalea and Macklemore fail to construct themselves as authentic or their membership is overtly contested by fellow members. This interplay indicates, as Bucholtz and Hall (2005) suggested, that authenticity is not a quality that, once ascribed to an individual, becomes part of some sort of permanent identity that resides within the individual and is present in every interaction. Authenticity, like all aspects of identity construction, is ascribed or contested within each interaction. An individual must consistently attempt to construct him/herself as authentic and his/her fellow participants in interaction must consistently confirm this identity construction.

It is important to reiterate that the hip-hop community itself is neither uniform nor monolithic. Like all communities, the term 'community' represents a variety of individuals with different motives, ideals, and sentiments. Therefore, in analyzing these three types of data, an attempt was made to show the varied and often conflicting opinions of members of the hip-hop community. As indicated in the analysis, specifically in terms of the YouTube commentary, Azalea and Macklemore have inspired divergent opinions in the hip-hop community regarding their authenticity and position within the

community. While the discussion below attempts to synthesize these opinions, it is by no means an attempt to claim that *all* members of the hip-hop community feel this way about Macklemore or Azalea or that *all* members of the hip-hop community agree on any issue. As will be discussed below, the term 'hip-hop community,' which once referred a small and relatively localized community, now represents a globalized group of individuals who share an appreciation for hip-hop music. Within this community, there are multiple factions or sub-communities who have both overlapping and differing opinions and goals that direct their community-related interactions. While these differences are worthy of further investigation, they were beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, when the term 'hip-hop community' is used, it does not signal community consensus but rather an opinion that is shared by multiple individuals within the community and which may or may not be shared by the majority of the community as a whole.

As discussed in the introduction, the racial dimension of authenticity within the hip-hop discourse community was of particular interest, as both Azalea and Macklemore cannot be viewed as authentic according to this dimension. This interest was shared by the hip-hop community, as the racial dimension was consistently brought up in all three types of data. As discussed earlier, Azalea and Macklemore do not attempt to mask their racial outsider status; instead, both artists embrace their whiteness as they grapple with other issues. However, members of the hip-hop community are clearly concerned about the presence and possibly the perceived encroachment of successful, white artists in the hip-hop arena. Race became the focus of Macklemore's interview with Hot 97 and was

also frequently discussed in the YouTube commentary. The issues of race, however, is not limited to artists such as Azalea and Macklemore. As Wilkins (2015) remarks:

> Hip-hop is no longer a subculture owned by black Americans. Today, it's a mainstream industry crafted in the executive offices of major record labels. The heavy beats and lyrical rhymes born in the Bronx in the 1970s have been legitimately bought, repackaged and commercialized for a new, larger audience. This music defines the culture of a large segment of young white people across the world. It has been integrated into the experience of a generation. This shift happened a while ago: According to MRI's American consumer survey, 70 percent to 75 percent of the adults purchasing rap music in 2001 were white, and the percentage undoubtedly has grown since then. (para. 3)

Wilkins' (2015) salient assessment goes back to McLeod's (2012) earlier claim regarding why an understanding of authenticity within the hip-hop community is necessary. The hip-hop community is concerned with authenticity because of the new commercial nature of hip-hop. As Wilkins (2015) points out, in 2001, 75 percent of rap music consumers were white. This number has undoubtedly grown with the addition of artists like Macklemore and Azalea. It is therefore unsurprising that members of the hip-hop community are concerned with the (in)authenticity of potential members, as the subculture created out of the strife of black Americans in the 1970s has almost entirely been overwhelmed by commercialized mainstream hip-hop.

Despite the power of this single dimension of authenticity, however, community members seem to recognize that, while problematic, race is only one of numerous issues when it comes to evaluating the authenticity of white artists such as Macklemore and Azalea. In some cases, Azalea's authenticity seemed to be an all or nothing case, such as in Excerpt (5.4) when Ebro asked Azalea if she was an imposter. While Macklemore was sometimes classified as a singer or a poet, these terms being used as an extension of some commenters' claims that Macklemore is not a rapper (Excerpt [6.9]), he was never

accused of being an imposter. In fact, some of the greatest differences between the treatment of Azalea and that of Macklemore by interviewers and YouTube commenters related less to their status as white artists and more to their gender. It quickly became apparent, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, that how others constructed Azalea was largely based on her gender. For instance, commenters felt free to discuss Azalea's 'tits' and 'fat ass,' while no comments were made regarding Macklemore's appearance. Similarly, Azalea was consistently asked questions about her romantic relationships and preferences in men in her interviews with both Hot 97 and The Breakfast Club, while the only question about Macklemore's romantic life was in reference to his song 'Same Love.' It seems that this gendered discussion regarding Azalea is not a reflection of the hip-hop community's views on gender but of how society in general constructs women. While hip-hop does include gendered performance as an element of authenticity, these conversations seem to have less to do with hip-hop's construction of gender and more to do with how society in general constructs these artists as gendered beings. Moving forward, it would be intriguing to investigate if and how Azalea and Macklemore respond to these gendered constructions of themselves.

Another surprising conclusion concerns the socio-locational dimension of authenticity. Like the racial dimension, the socio-locational dimension contains a dichotomy: the streets versus the suburbs. Neither Macklemore nor Azalea is authentic according to this dimension, as Macklemore was raised in the suburbs of Seattle and Azalea was raised in Australia. Neither environment is considered conducive to the construction of an authentic identity within the hip-hop community. However, this dimension seemed to play little role in the interviewers' and YouTube commenters'

evaluations of Azalea or Macklemore's (in)authenticity. While their place of origin was questioned, especially in connection to Azalea's accent, people did not seem to correlate the socio-locational dimension with the artist's authenticity. In other words, the fact that the artists did not come from the 'streets' did not seem to affect the interviewers' or YouTube commenters' opinion of the artists' (in)authenticity. This could be due to the fact that the artists do not attempt to hide the fact that they do not come from the 'right' place. In fact, both artists openly discuss their birthplace in their lyrics. On the other hand, disinterest regarding the socio-locational dimension could signal a shift in the construction of authenticity within the hip-hop discourse community. The community may be experiencing a shift in its understanding of authenticity, especially considering the fact that hip-hop as whole has become more mainstream, meaning that more and more communities of hip-hop fans and artists are popping up outside of the traditional locales. This goes back to the globalized nature of hip-hop discussed in the literature review. As hip-hop continues to expand, it becomes more difficult to claim birthplace as an element of authenticity when community members are originating from increasingly diverse areas.

In terms of linguistic authenticity, Azalea was severely scrutinized while no one voiced concern regarding Macklemore's speech patterns. In both of Azalea's interviews and in the YouTube commentary, people seemed overly concerned with her linguistic performance. Her performance was labeled cultural appropriation and inauthentic, and Azalea did not deny that she had 'borrowed' aspects hip-hop culture as she developed her sound as an artist. Meanwhile, people were disconcertingly quiet regarding Macklemore's linguistic performance. Macklemore's use of SAE is in fact more

authentic in that it is the dialect that Macklemore naturally acquired. However, in terms of member status within the hip-hop community, one would think that Macklemore's use of SAE would be seen as detrimental. However, members seemed to disregard Macklemore's use of SAE, possibly subconsciously connecting it to his status as a 'white' male. It seems that while Macklemore's linguistic performance may have been grouped together with his racial performance by some members of the hip-hop community, the contrast between Azalea's racial performance and linguistic performance was too jarring to be overlooked. In a review of Azalea's album, Drake (2014) notes:

> Iggy Azalea's other weakness is her voice, which consistently strikes a jarringly inauthentic note. She raps with a tightly-wound drawl, one that, to American ears, feels tone-deaf not musically, but socially. Her voice, in essence, sounds like a put-on version of a particularly technical rapper from the American South. […] Someone from the States would never attempt to pull this off on such a large stage; it requires an outsider's audacity, a lack of awareness about racial dynamics in the States. (para. 9)

Drake (2014) treats Azalea's linguistic performance as crass and racially-insensitive and links it to the fact that she is not from America. He does not question Azalea's talent but instead states that her performance is racially and culturally insensitive. Azalea's decision to appropriate linguistic features of the hip-hop community proves to be a crucial issue for many hip-hop community members, as many members cannot reconcile Azalea's identity as an Australian, white woman with the down-south accent with which she raps, which results in consistent claims of inauthenticity.

It is difficult for both Azalea and Macklemore to claim authenticity according to the political-economic dimension, as both artists have achieved mainstream success. However, both make overt attempts to prove that they are dedicated to the hip-hop community. Macklemore frequently discusses giving his music back to the people and his

status as an independent artist. Azalea discusses all the hard work and effort she has put into being a successful artist and alludes to the fact that, due to her immense success, she has more control over the record label than the label has over her. However, because of their status as mainstream artists, some community members question their authenticity according to this dimension. YouTube commenters frequently grouped Azalea and Macklemore with artists who are considered 'too mainstream' to be real hip-hop artists, which could indicate that, despite an artist's intentions, mainstream success will always been seen as negative in the community's eyes. This resistance to mainstream success could be a result of the rise of hip-hop in mainstream society, as discussed earlier. As more and more fans flood into a community that was originally segregated from mainstream society, some members of the hip-hop community could rightfully reject artists who become too mainstream, as such artists often cater to audiences that are not regarded as authentic members of the hip-hop community.

This shift signals the possibility that the hip-hop community may be developing a fast-growing subculture that does not share the same values as the rest of the community, a subculture that predominantly consists of white, mainstream individuals who were previously and in some cases still continue to be seen as outsiders by other members of the hip-hop community. As Heller (2003) notes, this shift points to "the tensions between commodity and authenticity, and the ways in which those questions are sites of struggle over who gets to define what counts as a legitimate identity, or what counts as an excellent product" (p. 475). What was once seen as inauthentic according to the political-economic dimension of authenticity (i.e. the process of developing into a mainstream artist who signs with a mainstream record label) is now evolving into a typical quality for

some hip-hop artists. This shift, however, is neither peaceful nor smooth, as the community continues to struggle with this evolving concept of authenticity and the desire of some community members to maintain the more traditional concept of authenticity that is outlined by McLeod (2012). As community members continue to argue (as seen in Chapter 6) over "who has the legitimate right to define what counts as competence, as authenticity, as excellence, and over who has the right to produce and distribute the resources of language and identity" (Heller, 2003, p. 474), the community will continue to experience these fractures, in which some community members view authenticity in one manner, while others see it differently. Whether this lack of consensus will eventually result in a division of the community into two (or more) separate communities (the mainstream hip-hop community and the traditional, underground hip-hop community) remains to be seen; however, it is evident that the community-internal diversity of viewpoints will continue to affect how community members evaluate potential members.

Despite this criticism, members of the hip-hop community do not seem to be troubled by Azalea and Macklemore's constructions of themselves in terms of the socio-psychological dimension. Both artists work to bring aspects of themselves into their music, rapping about their childhoods and their struggles to become successful in the music industry. It is difficult to discern whether Azalea and Macklemore are always speaking truthfully about their experiences; however, according to the data, few community members have yet to call either artist out for being inauthentic according to the socio-psychological dimension of authenticity. Instead, members of the hip-hop community seem to be more concerned with the artists' cultural knowledge. According to

McLeod (2012), for the hip-hop community in general, knowledge of the history and traditions of hip-hop signals that the individual values hip-hop as more than just a commodity. Although Azalea seems to have some cultural knowledge, as Wilkins (2015) remarks:

> Azalea is not an active participant in traditional hip-hop culture. You won't see her rocking the stage at underground clubs. You won't see her freestyling at cyphers (unless it's one manufactured by BET). And based on her recent exchange with rapper and producer Q-Tip, of the legendary hip-hop group A Tribe Called Quest, she has little knowledge of or interest in hip-hop's dynamic history. That's because Azalea isn't a product of that culture. Her ascent is a result of the increasing whiteness of hip-hop's consumer base. It's a commercial response to the tastes and demands of the audience that's driving hip-hop sales. (para. 7)

Azalea represents a different side of hip-hop – the mainstream, commercial side that has less to do with the traditions and history that built the culture and more to do with consumer supply and demand. Her fan base is also predominantly white, which goes back to the racial breakdown of hip-hop's consumer base, which was discussed earlier. Wilkins (2015) does not criticize Azalea for not being an active member of the hip-hop community; however, it is evident that he does not believe that she has a place within the traditional hip-hop community, as she is not authentic according to the cultural dimension.

Meanwhile, few people have discussed Macklemore's cultural knowledge. As discussed in reference to his song lyrics, Macklemore shows that he has been interested in hip-hop from a young age and has extensive knowledge of hip-hop's history. However, it is still peculiar that direct criticism of him has not been more prevalent, especially considering the amount of criticism that Azalea has received. Gordon (2014) articulates one reason why there has been a lack of criticism aimed at Macklemore:

> Few mainstream rappers have bothered to directly criticize Macklemore. The openly gay though decidedly underground rapper Le1f fired off a string of complaints after his performance at the MTV Video Music Awards, but that was largely motivated by the similarities between "Thrift Shop" and LE1F's "Wut"—a comparison that hardly seems imagined. Others like Kendrick, Fabolous and Schoolboy Q have taken the high road, suggesting that while Macklemore might not have won at the BET Awards, his mainstream success makes him impossible to trivialize.

Mainstream artists' deference to Macklemore indicates that Macklemore may have reached a level of success that makes it difficult for others to critique or challenge him. Macklemore himself voices this theory in his interview with The Breakfast Club. However, such deference, combined with the fact that mainstream hip-hop may represent a different group of community members than underground hip-hop, makes it difficult to determine whether Macklemore is actually regarded as authentic or whether the community simply does not feel comfortable challenging his authenticity due to his overwhelming success.

As Macklemore and Azalea continue to grow and mature as artists, it will be interesting to see whether their perceived (in)authenticity and position within the hip-hop community will continue to be challenged or whether these issues will earn some level of community consensus. This, of course, does not mean that all community members will agree on these issues; however, this argument will probably reach some level of stability, resulting in the artist's continued participation in the community or his/her disappearance from the spotlight. Just as Eminem and other white hip-hop artists received considerable pushback at the beginning of their careers, pushback which eventually ceased for the most part in Eminem's case or resulted in the rejection of the artist by the community (as in the case of Vanilla Ice), pushback regarding Azalea and Macklemore will eventually

reach a peak or dissipate. At the moment, it appears that Macklemore is the more accepted artist of the pair; however, as the artists release new music, their identities and positions within the hip-hop community will inevitably change, which could easily tip the scales in Azalea's favor.

As research into identity construction and the construction of authenticity continues to mature, specifically in conjunction with authenticity within the hip-hop community, one final issue must be considered. Macklemore and Azalea have been analyzed according to seven dimensions of authenticity: the socio-psychological dimension, the political-economic dimension, the cultural dimension, the gender-sexual dimension, the socio-locational dimension, the racial dimension, and the linguistic dimension. However, researchers have yet to establish how many realized dimensions equal perceived authenticity. In other words, does an artist have to be completely authentic according to all dimensions in order for him/her to be considered authentic? If not, how many dimensions are enough? Three? Four? Five? Six? McLeod (2012), for instance, did not even consider linguistic authenticity, which could indicate that, for him, the six dimensions, when all realized, equaled authenticity. On the other hand, Alim (2012) viewed the use of HHNL as an important component of authenticity. In order to truly understand if and how these dimensions aid in the construction of an authentic identity within the hip-hop community, further research must be conducted that considers these dimensions in a more individualized manner and investigates the complex interplay between the dimensions that results in unchallenged authenticity.

The construction of identity, specifically in terms of authenticity, is a fundamentally interactive process. As such, it cannot simply be reduced to the seven

dimensions that have been analyzed in this paper. However, these dimensions provide a unique way of understanding how authenticity is constructed within the hip-hop community or communities and provides tools for understanding *why* specific identity constructions are challenged or deemed inauthentic according to established community members. As this research moves forward, it will be interesting to see whether similar dimensions will be found in other communities and whether these dimensions provide a new way of understanding how individuals construct themselves as (in)authentic within a community.

REFERENCES

Alim, H. (2012). "Bring it to the cypher": Hip hop nation language. In M. Forman & M.A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint: The hip-hop studies reader* (pp. 531-563). New York: Routledge.

Bax, S. (2011). *Discourse and genre: Analysing language in context*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bennett, A. (1999). Hip hop am main: The localization of rap music and hip hop culture. *Media, Culture, & Society, 21*(1), 77-91.

Bucholtz, M. (1999). You da man: Narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 3*(4), 443-460.

Bucholtz, M. (2003). Sociolinguistic nostalgia and the authentication of identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics, 7*(3), 398-416.

Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2004). Language and identity. In A. Duranti (Ed.), *A companion to linguistic anthropology* (pp. 369-394). Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Bucholtz, M. & Hall, K. (2005). Language and interaction: a sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies, 7*(4), 585-614.

Chun, E. W. (2013). Ironic blackness as masculine cool: Asian American language and authenticity on YouTube. *Applied Linguistics, 34*(5), 592-612.

Ciepiela, K. (2011). From language as an identity marker to language as a toolkit for identity performance. In K. Ciepiela (Ed.), *Identity through a language lens* (pp. 7-20). New York: Peter Lang.

Cooper, B. (2014, July 15). Iggy Azalea's post-racial mess: America's oldest race tale, remixed. *Salon*. Retrieved from http://www.salon.com/2014/07/15/iggy_azaleas_post_racial_mess_americas_oldest_race_tale_remixed/

Cutler, C. (2003). "Keepin' it real": White hip-hoppers' discourses of language, race, and authenticity. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology, 13*(2), 211-233.

Cutler, C. (2014). *White hip-hoppers, language and identity in post-modern America*. New York: Routledge.

Dawkins, M. A. (2010). Close to the edge: The representational tactics of Eminem. *Journal of Popular Culture, 43*(3), 463-485.

De Fina, A., Schiffrin, D., & Bamberg, M. (Eds.). (2006). *Discourse and Identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Drake, D. (2014, April 22). Iggy Azalea's "The New Classic" isn't really. *Complex.* Retrieved from http://www.complex.com/music/2014/04/iggy-azalea-the-new-classic-review

Du Bois, J. W. (2007). The stance triangle. In R. Englebretson (Ed.), Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction (139-182). Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Erlewine, S. T. (2015). *Eminem*. Retrieved from http://www.allmusic.com/artist/eminem-mn0000157676/biography

Fought, C. (2006). *Language and Ethnicity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gordon, J. (2014, January 31). Frequently asked questions: Why do people hate Macklemore? *radio.com*. Retrieved from http://radio.com/2014/01/31/faq-why-do-people-hate-macklemore/

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied Thematic Analysis*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Guy, G. & Cutler, C. (2011). Speech style and authenticity: Quantitative evidence for the performance of identity. *Language Variation and Change, 23*(1), 139-162.

Heller, M. (2003). Globalization, the new economy, and the commodification of language and identity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *7*(4), 473-492.

Iggy Azalea biography. (2015). In *Bio*. Retrieved from http://www.biography.com/people/iggy-azalea

Johansson, M. (2012). Editorial and its comments: Follow-ups in a discussion forum. In A. Fetzer, E. Weizman, & E. Reber (Eds.), *Proceedings of the ESF strategic workshop on follow-ups across discourse domains: A cross-cultural exploration of their forms and functions* (pp. 151-164). Würzburg: European Science Foundation.

Keyes, C. L. (2012). Empowering self, making choices, creating spaces: Black female identity via rap music performance. In M. Forman & M.A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint: The hip-hop studies reader* (pp. 165-178). New York: Routledge.

Kilson, K. (2015, February 10). Iggy Azalea gets away with reverse minstrelsy because there's a market for it. *New Republic*. Retrived from http://www.newrepublic.com/article/121022/iggy-azaleas-willful-ignorance-race-feeds-her-haters

Lucas, T. (2006). Still A man's world for female rappers. *Billboard*, *118*(13), 6.

Macklemore biography. (2015). In *Bio*. Retrieved from http://www.biography.com/people/macklemore-21277565

McLeod, K. (2012). Authenticity within hip-hop and other cultures threatened with assimilation. In M. Forman & M.A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint: The hip-hop studies reader* (pp. 165-178). New York: Routledge.

Page, R., Barton, D., Unger, J. W., & Zappavigna, M. (2014). *Researching language and social media: A student guide*. New York: Routledge.

Reyes, A. (2005). Appropriation of African American slang by Asian American youth. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *9*(4), 509-532.

Rodman, G. B. (2006). Race…and other four letter words: Eminem and the cultural politics of authenticity. *Popular Communication*, *4*(2), 95-121.

Sweetland, J. (2002). Unexpected but authentic use of an ethnically-marked dialect. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, *6*(4), 514-536.

Tate, G. Hiphop turns 30: Whatcha celebratin' for?. In M. Forman & M.A. Neal (Eds.), *That's the joint: The hip-hop studies reader* (2nd ed.) (pp. 165-178). New York: Routledge.

Wilkins, L. (2015, February 7). Stop hating on Iggy Azalea's 'blaccent.' She's not hip-hop's real problem. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/02/07/stop-hating-on-iggy-azaleas-blaccent-shes-not-hip-hops-real-problem/

APPENDIX A: SELECT SONGS FROM AZALEA'S *THE NEW CLASSIC*

"Walk the Line"

Yeah we don't wanna do anything to scare your children
That's the last thing we wanna do
We don't wanna scare anybody

Never said it was fair, but still I never knew fear
Not in a million years could you tell me that I'd be here
I just hopped off that lear, my life on another tier
Lifting glasses for cheers, keep that hating out my ear
From country living to county skipping, this would drive you crazy
Check the rate that they pay me a giant could never slay me
Money never a maybe but never forgot my roots
I heard that the top is lonely I wonder if it's the truth
So I'm just climbing, paid off rhyming, now I'm shining could be blinding
Ain't too much real left but right here is where you could find it
This that new... classic, ain't this what you needed?
I'm what amazing look like, you'll recognize it when you see it

[Hook:]
Not where I wanna be but I'm far from home
Just tryna' make it on my own
And unless destiny calls I don't answer phones
This is the line that I walk alone
Ain't no going back now
Don't know where I'm at now
Ain't no going back now
This is the line that I walk alone

I've been counted out, I've been stepped on
I was wide awake and got slept on
I had everything and then lost it
Worked my ass off, I'm exhausted
All this talking about me, just talk about me
I'm here now, they can't walk around me
I'm dedicated, flow elevated
Tell every hater hope you never play it, said I'll never make it
I'm celebrating, and I'm never quitting, no resignation
Took desperate measures out of desperation
I'm a fresh face with no expiration
I know pressure make diamonds so I threw 'em off in this chain
When it's all on the line
I'm who you want in the game

Cause I'm gonna get it and that's fo sure
Can't be like y'all, that's no go
International, and y'all local, got this locked up just like po-po
Every beat get ate, that's ocho
Won't lose oh no that's Yoko.
Been up down like low lows
Still make my own on my solo.
Had to be here to believe it
Think like winners to perceive it
Here to let 'cha know that I mean it
If I speak it, and say keep it
This flow, that's genius
Just think about it, would I think about it?
If I didn't live it, won't ink about it
Married to the money, put a ring around it, what?

[Hook]

And everything ain't the way I planned it
But when the smoke clears I'm the last standing
This lifestyle can be so demanding
But I take off like a plane that ain't ever landing

[Hook]

Ain't no going back now
Ain't no going back now
This is the line and I walk alone

“Fancy” (feat. Charli XCX)

First thing's first, I'm the realest (realest)
Drop this and let the whole world feel it (let them feel it)
And I'm still in the Murda Bizness
I could hold you down, like I'm givin' lessons in physics (right, right)
You should want a bad bitch like this (huh)
Drop it low and pick it up just like this (yeah)
Cup of Ace, cup of Goose, cup of Cris
High heels, somethin' worth a half a ticket on my wrist (on my wrist)
Takin' all the liquor straight, never chase that (never)
Rooftop like we bringin' '88 back (what)
Bring the hooks in, where the bass at?
Champagne spillin', you should taste that

[Hook: Charli XCX]
I'm so fancy

You already know
I'm in the fast lane
From L.A. to Tokyo
I'm so fancy
Can't you taste this gold?
Remember my name
'Bout to blow

I said, "Baby, I do this, I thought that you knew this."
Can't stand no haters and honest, the truth is
And my flow retarded, they speak it depart it
Swagger on super, I can't shop at no department
better get my money on time, if they not money, decline
And swear I meant that there so much that they give that line a rewind
So get my money on time, if they not money, decline
I just can't worry 'bout no haters, gotta stay on my grind
Now tell me, who that, who that? That do that, do that?
Put that paper over all, I thought you knew that, knew that
I be the I-G-G-Y, put my name in bold
I been working, I'm up in here with some change to throw

[Hook]

[Bridge: Charli XCX]
Trash the hotel
Let's get drunk on the mini bar
Make the phone call
Feels so good getting what I want
Yeah, keep on turning it up
Chandelier swinging, we don't give a fuck
Film star, yeah I'm deluxe
Classic, expensive, you don't get to touch
Ow...

Still stuntin', how you love that?
Got the whole world asking how I does that
Hot girl, hands off, don't touch that
Look at it I bet you wishing you could clutch that
It's just the way you like it, huh?
You're so good, he's just wishing he could bite it, huh?
Never turn down nothing,
Slaying these hoes, gold trigger on the gun like

[Hook]

Who that, who that, I-G-G-Y

That do that, do that, I-I-G-G-Y
Who that, who that, I-G-G-Y
Blow

Who-who-who-who that, who that, I-G-G-Y
That do that, do that, I-G-G-Y
Who that, who that, I-G-G-Y
Blow

“Work”

Walk a mile in these Louboutins
But they don't wear these shits where I'm from
I'm not hating, I'm just telling you
I'm tryna let you know what the fuck that I've been through

Two feet in the red dirt, school skirt
Sugar cane, back lane
3 jobs took years to save
But I got a ticket on that plane
People got a lot to say
But don't know shit bout where I was made
Or how many floors that I had to scrub
Just to make it past where I am from

No money, no family. 16 in the middle of Miami. [3x]

[Hook:]
I've been up all night, tryna get that rich
I've been work, work, work, work, working on my shit
Milked the whole game twice gotta get it how I live
I've been work, work, work, work, working on my shit
Now get this work
Now get this work
Now get this work
Now get this work
Working on my shit

You can hate it or love it
Hustle and the struggle is the only thing I'm trusting
Thoroughbred in a mud brick before the budget
White chick on that Pac shit
My passion was ironic
And my dreams were uncommon
Guess I gone crazy, first deal changed me
Robbed blind basically raped me

Rose through the bullshit like a matador
Just made me madder and adamant to go at 'em
And even the score
So, I went harder
Studied the Carters till a deal was offered
Slept cold on the floor recording
At 4 in the morning and now I'm passing the bar
Like a lawyer
Immigrant, art ignorant
Ya ill intent was insurance for my benefit
Hate to be inconsiderate, but the industry took my innocence
Too late, now I'm in this bitch!
You don't know the half
This shit get real
Valley girls giving
Blow jobs for Louboutins
What you call that?
Head over heels?

No money, no family. 16 in the middle of Miami. [3x]

[Hook]

Pledge allegiance to the struggle
Ain't been easy
But cheers to Peezy for the weeks we lived out of duffel
Bags is all we had
Do anything for my Mama, I love you
One day I'll pay you back
For the sacrifice
That ya managed to muscle
16 you sent me through customs
So...
All aboard my spaceship to Mercury
Turn first at the light that's in front of me
Cause every night Imma do it like it's my last
This dream is all that I need
Cause it's all that I ever had

[Outro 2x:]
Now get this work
Now get this work
Now get this work
Now get this work
Working on my shit

“Goddess”

Ain't this what y'all need me for
You done pissed me off what is y'all leaving for
Oh what? A white girl with a flow ain't been seen before
Bow down until your knees get sore
Treat Neimans like a grocery store
Selfridges get the same rapport
Ask Bey' when we off on tour
Hopping out a fly whip screaming "This ain't yours"
How famous can one get 'fore she get tired
One phone call that make all the money get wired
Uh, spit fire that'll burn down an empire
20 deep in the sprinter tryn the Benz tires
Wave hello when I breeze by ya
Make enough in ten months
I could live off or retire (woo)
But I just won’t quit
Tryna figure out which part of this you just don’t get huh

[Hook:]
Lord, lemme know if you got this
Preaching about prophets
It ain’t no one man can stop us
Bow down to a Goddess, bow down to a Goddess, bow down to a Goddess
It ain’t no one man can stop us
Bow down to a Goddess
Goddess! Got it?

Same critics wondered if I had it in me
Now want me to play friendly
But how the hell you play friendly when the mention of my name could cause a media frenzy
The cameras flash everywhere, make it hard to miss me
Lately I been crazy 'til a psych will commit me
After any competition coming up against me
You think it’s anything better, then come convince me
Until then I’ll be leading the race
So bow down, put your knee to your face
While I make wine outta water, turn rappers into martyrs
Set it off whenever I-G-G in the place, uh
Young rapper, Goddess
Y'all a boring read like Rapper’s Digest
I could never see you fall like I skip through August
I’m thinkin' bout now would be the time to start this

[Hook]

[Bridge 2x:]
Put your hands to the sky
But only if you feel the vibe
They wanna bury me alive but y'all know real gods never die

[Hook 2x]

“Lady Patra” (feat. Mavado)

[Hook 2x:]
Classic, Sinatra
Bad, Phantom of the Opera
Shuffle the deck, I be the queen in the pack
Gotcha, Lady Patra

Paper planes, roger that, 10-4
Got money, been had it, still gettin' more
Oh y'all in the building, but on different floors
Y'all couldn't see it how we see it on ya tippie-toes
Iggy so killing, so pretty, still pretty
Talkin' hits on hits, McGuire, Bonds, Griffey
Mash it up bring the queens of the dancehall with me
Pearl handle on the pistol, tell this world to come and get me
And I'm thummin' through designers to pick which'll fit me proper
Paid dues, climbed through the ranks, but we ain't Shabba
Need me a rude boy, something straight out the shockers
That could drive a girl crazy, all the way off my rocker
Versaces over eyelids, lookin' like Biggie Poppa
No they thought I wouldn't make it, I'm lookin' like what's the matter?
But tell them money talks, and them man not saying nada
This the new classic, signed sincerely, Lady Patra

[Hook 2x]

[Mavado]
She's special and phenomenal
Body strong like a stallion
She got me wild like an animal
Chop it up, eh pon de floor
Chop it up, eh pon de floor
You put your whine dynamical
Billion dollar shit, trillion dollar looks
Tell them broke bitch, read it in the books
Your thing turn up, you got Louis on your foot

You know you got gully on the hook
It's the [?]

[Hook 2x]

[Mavado]
Said she need a real man
Oh yes she want a real one
So she fuck with a Jamaican
Done (haha!)
Your body lookin' like a billion dollar
The baddest bitch you ever seen
The one I want to be my baby mama
I fuck her like my enemy

[Hook x2]

APPENDIX B: SELECT SONGS FROM MACKLEMORE'S *THE HEIST*

"Ten Thousand Hours"

Uh
I hope that God decides to talk through him
That the people decide to walk with him
Regardless of pitchfork cosigns I've jumped
Make sure the soundman doesn't cockblock the drums
Let the snare knock the air right out of your lungs
And those words be the oxygen
Just breathe
Amen, regardless I'mma say it
Felt like I got signed the day that I got an agent
Got an iTunes check, shit man I'm paying rent
About damn time that I got out of my basement
About damn time I got around the country and I hit these stages
I was made to slay them
Ten thousand hours I'm so damn close I can taste it
On some Malcolm Gladwell, David Bowie meets Kanye shit
This is dedication
A life lived for art is never a life wasted
Ten thousand

[Hook:]
Ten thousand hours felt like ten thousand hands
Ten thousands hands, they carry me
Ten thousand hours felt like ten thousand hands
Ten thousands hands, they carry me

Now, now, now
This is my world, this is my arena
The TV told me something different I didn't believe it
I stand here in front of you today all because of an idea
I could be who I wanted if I could see my potential
And I know that one day I'mma be him
Put the gloves on, sparring with my ego
Everyone's greatest obstacle, I beat 'em
Celebrate that achievement
Got some attachments, some baggage I'm actually working on leaving
See, I observed Escher
I love Basquiat
I watched Keith Haring
You see I study art
The greats weren't great because at birth they could paint

The greats were great cause they paint a lot
I will not be a statistic
Just let me be
No child left behind, that's the American scheme
I make my living off of words
And do what I love for work
And got around 980 on my SATs
Take that system, what did you expect?
Generation of kids choosing love over a desk
Put those hours in and look at what you get
Nothing that you can hold, but everything that it is
Ten thousand

[Hook]

Same shit, different day, same struggle
Slow motion as time slips through my knuckles
Nothing beautiful about it, no light at the tunnel
For the people that put the passion before them being comfortable
Raw, unmedicated heart, no substitute
Banging on table tops, no substitute
I'm feeling better than ever man, what is up with you?
Scraping my knuckles, I'm battling with some drug abuse
I lost another friend, got another call from a sister
And I speak for the people that share that struggle too
Like they got something bruised
My only rehabilitation was the sweat, tears and blood when up in the booth...

It's the part of the show
Where it all fades away
When the lights go to black
And the band leaves the stage
And you wanted an encore
But there's no encore today
Cause the moment is now
Can't get it back from the grave

Part of the show
It all fades away
Lights go to black
Band leaves the stage
You wanted an encore
But there's no encore today
Cause the moment is now
Can't get it back from the grave

Welcome to the heist [2x]

"Can't Hold Us" (feat. Ray Dalton)

Ay, ay, ay
Good to see you, come on in, let's go
Yeah, let's go
Alright, alright
OK, uh, alright, OK
Alright, OK

Return of the Mack, get up!
What it is, what it does, what it is, what it isn't.
Looking for a better way to get up out of bed
Instead of getting on the Internet and checking a new hit
Get up! Fresh out, pimp strut walking, little bit of humble, little bit of cautious
Somewhere between like Rocky and Cosby. Sweater gang, nope, nope y'all can't copy
Yup. Bad, moon walking, this here is our party, my posse's been on Broadway,
And we did it our way.
Grown music, I shed my skin and put my bones into everything I record to it
And yet I'm on.
Let that stage light go and shine on down,
Got that Bob Barker suit game and plinko in my style.
Money, stay on my craft and stick around for those pounds,
But I do that to pass the torch and put on for my town
Trust me. On my I-N-D-E-P-E-N-D-E-N-T shit hustlin'
Chasing dreams since I was fourteen with the four track bussing
Halfway cross that city with the backpack
Fat cat, crushing labels out here, now they can't tell me nothing
We give that to the people, spread it across the country
Labels out here, now they can't tell me nothing
We give it to the people, spread it across the country

[Hook: Ray Dalton]
Can we go back, this is the moment
Tonight is the night, we'll fight 'til it's over
So we put our hands up like the ceiling can't hold us
Like the ceiling can't hold us
Can we go back, this is the moment
Tonight is the night, we'll fight 'til it's over
So we put our hands up like the ceiling can't hold us
Like the ceiling can't hold us

Now, can I kick it? Thank you. Yeah I'm so damn grateful.
I grew up, really wanted gold fronts
But that's what you get when Wu-Tang raised you

Y’all can’t stop me, go hard like I got an 808 in my heart beat
And I’m eating at the beat like you gave a little speed to a great white shark on shark week
Raw. Tell me go up. Gone!
Deuces goodbye. I got a world to see, and my girl she wanna see Rome,
Caesar make you a believer. Now I never ever did it for a throne.
That validation comes from giving it back to the people. Now sing this song and it goes like
Raise those hands, this is our party
We came here to live life like nobody was watching
I got my city right behind me
If I fall, they got me. Learn from that failure gain humility and then we keep marching ourselves

[Hook]

And so we put our hands up
And so we put our hands up

Wa oh oh oh wa oh oh oh wa oh oh
Let's go!

Na na na na na na na na (aha)
Hey
And all my people say

Na na na na na na na na (that's right, feels good)
Hey
And all my people say

Na na na na na na na na (it's alright)
(oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh)
And all my people say

Na na na na na na na na
Ma-ckle-more

[Hook]

“Make the Money”

Now, this is my job, I will not quit it
Pulled me out the depths when I thought that I was finished
Yeah I questioned if I could go the distance
That's just the work, regardless of who's listening, listening
Listen, see I was meant to be a warrior

Fight something amongst me, leave here victorious
Classroom of kids, or a venue performing
If I'd done it for the money I'd have been a fucking lawyer
Concrete, vagabond, van telling stories
Humbled by the road, I'm realizing I'm not important
See life's a beautiful struggle, I record it
Hope it helps you maneuvering through yours and
That's why we stay in the lab at night
I've been staring into this pad for over half my life
A true artist won't be satisfied
So I guess that's the sacrifice
And I say

[Hook]
Make the money, don't let the money make you
Change the game, don't let the game change you
I'll forever remain faithful
All my people stay true, I say
Make the money, don't let the money make you
Change the game, don't let the game change you
I'll forever remain faithful
All my people stay true

Forget about the fame, fortune and the mansion
Sitting and tripping watching myself on a plasma
Yeah, I start slipping when I'm thinking about that stuff
Ego won't swole until karma catches that up, that up
I'm my grandma's number one grandson
I lost myself to remember who that was
We start thinking about some kicks, necklace
What I really need is a job off Craigslist
Take away the dot com, name, love
Fans, Twitter followers, and the buzz
See, you keep the issues but you take away the drugs
And I had to find out who I really was
Who I really wasn't
So sick of who I was becoming
Yeah, tired of running
Time to look at the man in the mirror until I can learn to love him

[Hook]

[Bridge 2x:]
Of course I want dubs and a candy painted 'lac
Watch the videos and get the girls in the back
But if that's what I believe in, and the reason that I rap

Uncle Sam is my pimp when he puts me on the track

[Hook]

Forget about the fame
I said forget about the fame
I'll forever remain faithful
Stay true, stay true, stay true

“A Wake” (feat. Evan Roman)

[Interlude: Evan Roman]
I need love
You need love
Give me love
And I'll give you my love

They say thirty is the new twenty
And twenty is the new thirty shit I guess
Makes sense, cause fifteen year olds seem twenty
And twenty five year olds seem ten
I used to drink away my paycheck
Celebrate the mistakes I hadn't made yet
Our generation isn't the best on safe sex
We forget the latex, becoming Planned Parenthood patients
Synthetic heroin is the new basshead
So much to escape, fuck a straight edge
Walk around looking through a fake lens
Apps this good, who’s got time to make friends?
I wish I didn't care
Acynical hipsters with long hair
Cocaine problems, like my music
It's not my issue, I can't solve it

[Hook: Evan Roman]
My flight has finally landed down
And the ground has stopped moving all around
Eyes open, awake for the very first time
We both forfeit this game of crime

They say it's so refreshing to hear somebody on records
No guns, no drugs, no sex, just truth
The guns that's America, the drugs are what they gave to us
And sex sells itself, don't judge her 'til it's you
Ah, I'm not more or less cautious
The rappers rappin' 'bout them strippers up on the pole, copping

These interviews are obnoxious
Saying that it's poetry is so well spoken, stop it
I grew up during Reaganomics
When Ice T was out there on his killing cops shit
Or Rodney King was getting beat on
And they let off every single officer
And Los Angeles went and lost it
Now every month there is a new Rodney on YouTube
It's just something our generation is used to
And neighborhoods where you never see a news crew
Unless they're gentrifying, white people don't even cruise through
And my subconscious telling me stop it
This is an issue that you shouldn't get involved in
Don't even tweet, R.I.P Trayvon Martin
Don't wanna be that white dude, million man marchin'
Fighting for our freedom that my people stole
Don't wanna make all my white fans uncomfortable
But you don't even have a fuckin' song for radio
Why you out here talkin race, tryin' to save the fuckin' globe
Don't get involved if the cause isn't mine
White privilege, white guilt, at the same damn time
So we just party like it's nineteen ninety nine
Celebrate the ignorance while these kids keep dying

[Hook]

[Interlude]

"Victory Lap"

And they say, "Don't forget where you come from
Don't die holding on to your words
Cause you know you got a whole world to change
But understand who you got to change first"

And I was like "Fuck that", humility bust back
I remember the days with nothing but a bus pass
I was just a little shorty just hoping that I could find a bum to buy a 40 for me
And have enough for a bud sack
Yeah, and I dance on that instrumental
Unorthodox like Basquiat with the pencil
Gimme a microphone and a beat box I could vent to
Music the only medium that I could find myself through
Recluse, sipping on some lean I would let loose
Looking in the mirror, watching myself lose
Cleaned up in '08, got a job making barely minimum wage

To get into that page
Hit the road with RL, performing in front of 8 people
And that shit will check your ego
About around that time I'm watching that EP go
From nothing to getting us booked around the country
I know no limits, life can change in an instant
8 People turn into sold out shows in a minute
And I'm watching my pops in the back row grinning
With his glass up to my mom, toasting his Guinness

[Hook:]
And we on (we on)
Good music, get lost in the ambiance
When day we'll leave here
But these words live on
Till then, we keep on making the songs

So put 'em up, up up, up up (so high)
So put 'em up, up up, up up (so high)
So put 'em up, up up, up up (so high)
Put 'em up, up up, up up (so high)
So put 'em up, up up, up up (so high)
So put 'em up, up up, up up (so high)

I remember that Freshman edition
Last year thinking to myself like
Yah, nah, I won't win it yet
I probably won't get it, but I'm gonna give it everything
Play my position
The next 11 months I gave it all everything I had in me
Left blood, sweat, tears in every God damn city
No label, no deal, no publicist, indie
Just music that connected and fans that rode with me
Throw me a gold mine, and a co-sign
While you're riding a couple dope rides
2 women, both dimes
Not gonna lie, that shit sounds so nice
But I got creative control and my soul’s mine
I wouldn't trade it, maybe I'm crazy
I put on for my city
Seattle that raised me
Rule 4080, it's really not changing
Now a days make good music, the people are your label

[Hook]

Oh my God, feels like a victory lap
Can I have that moment
Can I talk my shit

And they say, "Don't forget where you come from
Don't die holding on to your words
Cause you know you got a whole world to change
But understand who you got to change first"

Put 'em up, up up, up up
Up, up up, up up
Up, up up, up up

Macklemore, Ryan Lewis, Seattle

Put 'em up, up up, up up
Up, up up, up up (so high)