- ARTICLE -

Whiteness With(out) Borders: Translocal narratives of whiteness in heavy metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia

Catherine Hoad

Abstract

This article discusses how narratives of white masculine identity have been deployed in nation-specific ways within heavy metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia. While heavy metal's global spread has allowed more diverse aesthetics to emerge, within these nations it has also constructed rigid boundaries of community tied both historically and contemporaneously to whiteness. This article interrogates how the dominant practices of three heavy metal scenes affirm an 'originary' whiteness that erases its migratory and/or colonial status. In this article I investigate the processes through which discourses of whiteness and white masculinity are translocated and translated from one context to another, enabling spaces of both negotiation and resistance. I address how national heavy metal scenes negotiate these intersections of musicality, whiteness and nationhood in ways that may explore new possibilities for white masculine identities, while also reproducing a rigid politics of power, privilege and exclusion.

Introduction

As heavy metal experiences wide geographic growth, both its musical style and culture have expanded. However, just as heavy metal's global spread has allowed communities to sound their own particular aesthetics and sociopolitical concerns, this spread has in turn enabled the construction and affirmation of national identity as that which is historically and contemporaneously tied to whiteness and white masculinity. Within such heavy metal scenes, national identity is bound up in the master symbols of nationhood that bear the burden of belonging. Appeals to these symbols allow distinct nationalisms to emerge; nationalisms that are overwhelmingly mandated by whiteness. This has the effect of staging national identity as authentic while simultaneously allowing the erasure and displacement of indigenous culture. The excision of non-white, non-masculine bodies from nationalist narratives extends into the scenic practices of heavy metal. In attempting to 'indigenise' white bodies through

Catherine Hoad is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney. Her research addresses the intersections of music scenes, gender and ethnic identity, with a specific focus on mapping the ways in which whiteness is embedded within the dominant narratives of heavy metal communities. Her doctoral thesis explores the processes through which discourses of patriarchal whiteness and white nationalism have been deployed across heavy metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia, and how such narratives are embroiled in broader regional trajectories of masculinity and colonialism.

mechanisms that both appropriate and efface the musicality of non-white Others, the spatial and musical parameters of these heavy metal scenes unfold in ways that continue to affix racial significance to metal's otherwise invisible whiteness. In this article I argue that research within heavy metal must track the intricacies and nuances of metal's white centre to deconstruct the naturalised position of white hegemonic masculinity. Such a subject position is structured by contextual mechanisms that present whiteness, and crucially whitenesses, as both banal and sacred, trans-historical and sovereign, victimised and normalised. This article then destabilises the normative position of white masculinity within heavy metal scenes through pointing to its realisations across seemingly disparate geographical locations. Interrogation of the processes through which discourses of whiteness and white masculinity are translocated and translated from one context to another indicates that such identities are realised in fragmentary rather than cohesive ways. I thus demonstrate that by drawing attention to the national specificity with which whiteness is realised within heavy metal, researchers can make visible the hidden whitenesses of heavy metal scenes, cultures and practices.

This article is drawn from a larger doctoral project, which uses critical discourse analysis and theoretical frameworks informed by Whiteness Studies to interrogate the matrix of whiteness, masculinity and nationhood through which heavy metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia produce and defend identity. In this article, I argue that heavy metal scenes within these three nations have affixed distinct whitenesses with an originary significance that seeks to conceal their violent origins. I begin by addressing the wider issue of how whiteness is represented within heavy metal scholarship, where I contend that whiteness is overwhelmingly invisibilised through discourses that situate white bodies as a norm and therefore obscure their political and social significance. I argue that research in heavy metal must address not only whiteness, but whitenesses, and in doing so come to terms with localised white inflections as they emerge within specific scenes. As key sample sites, I focus on Norwegian black metal, South African Afrikaans metal, and Australian extreme metal, and give a brief overview of the history and characteristics of each scene.

In offering analyses of how whiteness gains expression within the context of distinct heavy metal scenes, I articulate the three key forms of white nationalism that emerge from these sites – Norway's monstrous nationalism, South Africa's resistant nationalism and Australia's banal nationalism. In this article, I track how these nationalisms shape the trajectory of whitenesses by focussing on how they are aligned with the aesthetics, practices and cultures of three distinct heavy metal scenes. This article interrogates how the dominant practices of each of these scenes affirm an 'originary' whiteness that erases its migratory and/or colonial status. I argue that this is achieved through three key mechanisms: firstly, the collation of master symbols which signify whiteness; secondly, the simultaneous erasure and appropriation of Indigenous signifiers; and finally, the mobilising of these constructions of originary whiteness into declarations of superiority. These three scenes and their entrenched

nationalisms simultaneously challenge and affirm the boundaries of civic identity and the borders of belonging. Reinforcing the parameters of national identity through heavy metal emerges as a defence of whiteness, and white masculinity. Such boundaries of identity have enabled both tacit and explicit racisms to foster a sense of community formed through collective memory and territory. In doing so, these community sentiments have allowed heavy metal scenes to act as territories of both white hegemonic power and white victimhood.

Whiteness and Nationhood in Heavy Metal

The task of my research at large is to unveil the (in)visibility of whiteness within heavy metal scenes, and to map how such whiteness is deployed within particular countries. Doing so reveals how nationhood emerges within predominantly white metal scenes; and furthermore combats narratives which characterise 'tradition' within such scenes as camp or playful (see Bayer 2009). Such discussions instead point to the ways in which such symbolic nationhood engages with more complex discourses of heritage and belonging. While the global spread of metal (see Wallach, Berger and Greene 2011; Hjelm, Kahn-Harris and LeVine 2013) means that fans at large are no longer 'overwhelmingly white' (Walser 1993, 17); heavy metal nonetheless remains a 'white-dominated discourse', an observation Walser made more than two decades ago (1993, 17). Metal, as Weinstein argues, is a predominantly white genre (2000, 111), though the ways in which this dominance is realised have exceeded the traditional boundaries of simple demographics. Whiteness is not only a demographic category but has a cultural significance (Weinstein 2000, 111). According to Weinstein, such significance may not be overtly or necessarily racist – it is less an affirmation of whiteness than it is an 'obtrusive absence' of blackness, she suggests (2000, 111). Despite this, I argue that the significance of whiteness has been historically and contemporaneously constituted precisely through a process of exscription: of non-white bodies, non-white voices, and the racial status of whiteness itself. As such, while the growth and dynamism of the global metal scene may ostensibly provide a challenge to and therefore negate the perceived overwhelming whiteness of metal communities, metal nonetheless remains a white discourse. Furthermore, I argue that current academic modes of addressing the whiteness of heavy metal are largely limited to discussions of demographics, virtuosity and spectacular racism. I contend that the effect of this narrow critical focus is to normalise whiteness and white masculinity within heavy metal and obscure its cultural and political significance. Approaches to heavy metal cultures that allow whiteness to be represented as unremarkable, and hence ignore the infrastructural power of whiteness, have facilitated the discursive and material reiteration of racial difference and hierarchies within scenes. Interrogations of the means through which national identity is both tacitly and explicitly tied to white heteromasculine identity reveal the mechanisms of power that work to both fetishise and normalise whiteness.

Metal is a site that both enables a tradition of exclusion and nostalgic (re)production of purity, yet also defines its whiteness through the dominance of white musicians,

industry workers and racialised marketing tools (Spracklen 2013, 102). Research has overwhelmingly suggested that metal fans are predominantly white and working class (Kahn-Harris 2007, 11) yet I argue that heavy metal is not nor has ever truly been inherently white in a demographic sense. Rather, I argue that understandings of its aesthetics, practices and cultures continue to be steeped in white hegemony. Kahn-Harris reflects upon this when he espouses the dangers of taking as fact the suggestion that metal is 'predominantly white, male, heterosexual and working class' and applying such understandings indiscriminately to all metal genres (2007, 11). I wish to add to this the tensions that emerge in applying the same assumptions to all metal geographic sites, and particularly (and perhaps paradoxically) sites that are dominated by white male bodies. Heavy metal is a carrier of hegemonic whiteness (Spracklen 2013, 102) yet in approaching such a line of inquiry I argue that analyses of heavy metal can perform the vital political work of destructing hegemony. This article then attempts to disrupt the hegemony of metallic whiteness by pointing to its fragmentation across three separate countries, and revealing its mechanisms of obscurance. Through drawing discussions of metal's whiteness out of Anglo-American contexts and instead situating such discussions across disparate locales, I propose an understanding of whitenesses in heavy metal as a response to a solidifying conception of whiteness, and the political positions that emerge through such uniform perceptions.

Metallic whitenesses emerge as 'stances' (Berger, 2010), wherein fans and musicians within a transnational metal community stake out identities that are sharply opposed to certain national visions and pastimes, while strengthening their rootedness in others (Wallach, Berger and Greene 2011, 7). Such stances, in their most aggressive manifestations, can be dictated by an exclusionary, violent localism that parlays a politics of 'us' and 'them'. The whitenesses that emerge through the ethnosymbolism deployed by heavy metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia, while not universalisable, are nonetheless complicit in the construction of hegemonic whiteness. Such whiteness is invisibilised (Frankenburg 1993) and functions as equivalent to racial normativity (Delgado and Stefancic 1997). Yet whiteness is also made hypervisible through claims to its contextual importance; and, crucially, enters into the problematic territory of white indigeneity and authenticity. Whiteness has an authenticating function within heavy metal discourse. The effectiveness with which heavy metal scenes have been able to capitalise on themes of authenticity, purity and national pride (see Hochhauser 2011) indicates that the rhetoric of the authentic permeates aspects of cultural life, such as the leisure spaces of music scenes, just as it infiltrates political contexts. I am nonetheless interested in the constitutive parts of 'authenticity' as it emerges in the nationalist rhetoric of heavy metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia, and how it informs, or rather, *authenticates* (Moore 2002), and hence erases the violent colonialist strategies of white patriarchal sovereignty.

Setting the Scene

The three heavy metal scenes I address in this article have each emerged within different historical and social contexts, and hence developed their own distinct nuances and practices. Norwegian black metal, led by bands such as Mayhem, Burzum, Darkthrone, Emperor and Immortal, grew from existing extreme metal styles to form a distinctive subgenre (and spawn further subgenres in its own right) in the early 1990s. Stylistically, black metal typically incorporates high-pitched shrieking vocals, incredibly fast tempos, heavily distorted guitars; blast beat drumming and raw production qualities. Initially characterised by an anti-Christian focus and an interest in pseudo-Satanic ritual, black metal has expanded to incorporate themes of paganism, Norse history, fascism and environmentalism. Black metal remains a genre of central importance in Norway, where it has become a component of national and cultural identity. The genre has grown from its small, underground roots to become a national phenomenon of major cultural significance. Conversely, Afrikaans heavy metal is a marginal genre, emerging from the small but established South African metal scene only within the past two decades. Stylistically, Afrikaans metal traverses a range of genres, from the guttural vocals and downtuned guitars of death metal to mid-tempo groove, though the unifying convention of the scene is the use of the Afrikaans language for explicitly political purposes. Bands such as Beeldenstorm, Mind Assault, Volkmag, Insek and Kobus! have taken up this task; writing songs in Afrikaans, speaking Afrikaans on stage and creating 'Afrikaans metal for Afrikaners'. Such a project, however, is laden with complexities. Afrikaans metal seeks to restore pride to Afrikaner identity and tradition—a problematic goal given the long and violent history of repression in South Africa at the hands of the Afrikaner population. Australian extreme metal emerges from a similar place of scenic isolation. Australian heavy metal has long been on the peripheries of the global heavy metal scene at large. Even within a national context the genre has always been 'resolutely underground' (Fischer-Giffin 2008, i). Spanning death metal, black metal, thrash metal and grindcore, Australian extreme metal has its roots in the local scenes of the early 1980s, and having staked its reputation on brutality (Overell 2012), has gradually developed a strong national following. The relative smallness and geographic isolation of Australian scenes makes the convergence represented by the label 'extreme metal' a particularly important one within an Australian context, as fans that might usually be separated by genre preference are unified by (and potentially defined through) hybrid styles such as blackened thrash. The Australian metal scene is situated within an interplay of local and global considerations (Phillipov 2008, 217); simultaneously marginal yet tethered to a global metal culture.

The conditions under which each scene has developed and cultivated its identity are characterised by local inflections. Scenes as sites of production, performance, reception and sharing of common musical tastes and practices (Peterson and Bennett 2004, 1-3) can be embedded in long-standing local cultures. Furthermore, scenes may use music appropriated via 'global flows and networks to construct particular narratives of the local' (Peterson and Bennett 2004, 7). I am interested in how such localism emerges as

what Twine and Gallagher have called 'white inflections' (2008, 5); the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented. Such multiplexity is imperative to unveiling not only the whiteness of heavy metal, but also the whitenesses it enfolds. The national specificity with which whiteness is valorised is central to understanding the ways national subjects are signified across metal scenes in Norway, South Africa and Australia. In these countries, hegemonic national identity is a construction built upon the mutually supportive discourses of masculinity and whiteness. Such a longstanding alliance is vital to the ways in which heavy metal scenes both reflect and problematise varied national agendas. This is not to say that all heavy metal scenes are inherently and directly nationalistic, but rather to interrogate the ways in which scenic practices, from the most overtly jingoistic to the seemingly banal (see Billig 1995), are embedded within larger social categories of gender, ethnicity and nationality. In some cases, though, metal scenes, cultures and communities do reproduce dominant nationalisms in ways that are exclusionary and restrictive, rather than liberatory or countermodal. The central narratives of Norwegian black metal, South African Afrikaans metal and Australian extreme metal circulate through extant discourses of masculinity and whiteness. These particular scenes recirculate hegemonic discourses of white national identity and patriarchal sovereignty; they do so, however, with specifically local inflections.

Symbolising Nation, Signifying Whiteness

While white nationhood is central to the scenic identity of the heavy metal communities of Norway, South Africa and Australia, it is necessary to recognise that such nationalisms take on different forms, and propagate different narratives of whiteness, dependent on their context. These heavy metal scenes each correspond to particular epistemologies of national whiteness. My research at large distinguishes three key nationalisms that emerge in distinct ways in each scene: Norway's monstrous nationalism, South Africa's resistant nationalism, and Australia's banal nationalism. For the purposes of this article I limit the use of these to showing how they shape the trajectory of white hegemony within the specific heavy metal scenes to which they are aligned. Concerns over the loss of an 'authentic' Norwegian national identity are manifest in the monstrous forms of discontent that characterised the development of black and Viking metal scenes in Norway. In South Africa, the redistribution of power following the demise of Apartheid has initiated a conversation within the Afrikaans metal scene in which resistant whiteness figures heavily. In Australia, the fetishisation of white 'sameness' and banality has enabled the exclusion of Otherness from extreme metal. While narrating whiteness in different ways, these distinct forms of white nationalism are manifest in the archetypes of national identity that police the borders of sovereignty. These three heavy metal scenes reproduce dominant white narratives that are underwritten by a myth of community grounded in the promotion of white identity – a union which is, for many, bound up in collective

memory, identity and history rendered explicit through celebrations of national identity within heavy metal. The task then lies in interrogating the means through which nationalism is packaged within these cultural texts, in both overt and tacit ways, even as (and potentially precisely *because*) metal continues to spread across cultural territories and political borders.

Heavy metal communities within Norway, South Africa and Australia are informed by distinct nationalisms that reproduce and maintain white patriarchy in different ways. The effect of this is to affix national whiteness with an originary significance that obscures its migratory and/or colonial beginnings. This is achieved primarily through the collation and consecration of master symbols that signify whiteness. National identity is represented or encoded in a collection of symbols such as language, institutions, songs, literature and artefacts. In Norwegian black metal, this emerges through the 'terrifying or monstrous' ethnic content produced by Norwegian black metal (Wilson 2010, 152). The symbols and objects (runes, swords, shields, and appeals to Nordic folklore)[1] that are supposed to 'fill the void hollowed out by the modern Northern-European nation-state' (Wilson 2010, 152) become imbued with a nationalist fetishism which both negates indigenous pre-Nordic settlement and emphasises the hostility between the authentic white 'North' and the globalised world. Asserting a romantic nationalist link between the self and the North becomes a means of valorising heritage and laying a foundation for an anti-Christian, anti-urban, pro-nationalist crusade. The imagining of a tribal society in conflict with the 'new' is also central to the claims to white victimhood that underpin the resistant white discourses and ethnic symbolism of Afrikaans metal. The scene's fetishizing of the Afrikaans language itself,[2] alongside the colonial figures of the Voortrekkers and rural Boers, the Apartheid institutions of the *Broederbond*, *Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging* and anthem *Die Stem van Suid Afrika*,[3] and the frequent allusions to the Afrikaner nationalist discourse of blood and soil, present Afrikaner culture as indispensable to yet under threat[4] in South Africa, while also allowing for the erasure of white compliance in the state-sanctioned racial violence of apartheid.

Where the white nationalism of the Norwegian and South African scenes may be more directly tied to tangible institutions and histories—language, law and religion—the nation constructed within Australian extreme metal is one largely maintained through tacit reproductions of hegemonic Australian identity. Australian extreme metal's nationalist narratives are dominated by common archetypes—the convict, the heroic explorer, the bushman, the digger, the athlete, and the Anzac—yet all emerge with an emphasis on the 'everyday bloke' and the icons of masculine socialization with which he engages.[5] The acceptance of the popular idea of the knock-about, hard-drinking, sports-loving, down-to-earth 'bloke' as the typical Australian male (Thompson 2007, 178) allows such figures to be seen to possess the transhistorical essence of normal masculinity that shapes nationalist narratives, and denies the violence of the nation's past. Discourses of accommodation and confrontation shape understandings of Others, and hence determine which specific practices, traditions and symbols become

emblematic of entire ways of life, and made to carry the burden of identity within heavy metal scenes. Furthermore, the fetishing of white nationalism and the continual deployment of such master symbols within metal narratives establishes stringent boundaries of who may claim to belong, both within the space of heavy metal scenes and the nation at large.

Appropriation and Exclusion: Whitening National Musics

Projects that make authentic belonging within a nation contingent upon whiteness do the double work of representing white bodies as a spatial and cultural norm, and highlighting the uncomfortable Otherness of non-whiteness. Symbolising nationhood through the collation of white signifiers conceals the artifice of authentic nationhood, and extenuates the exclusionary whiteness of dispossession. The valorisation of 'white' in heavy metal subculture can thus be interpreted as the 'creation of the semblance of an ethnic group for individuals who are perceived to be nonethnics' (Weinstein 2000, 113). This 'semblance of an ethnic group' becomes an integral tool in the attempts to navigate and destabilise what Hebdige refers to as the 'virtual impossibility of authentic white identification' (1979, 64). Heavy metal scenes across Norway, South Africa and Australia hence confront the 'impossibility' of authentic whiteness, and renegotiate the conditions for authenticity in complex and frequently disingenuous ways. The musical practices of metal attempt to secure a place for whiteness in the broader history of these countries by appropriating non-white signifiers, albeit through means that essentialise indigenous cultures. This unfolds differently in all three nations as a result of disparate regional histories, aesthetic traditions and empirical realities. Nonetheless, all these practices share the goal of affirming the history of hegemonic white nationhood. Within Norwegian black metal, for example, Paganism and appeals to romanticised heathenism inform a philosophical and visual undercurrent that may not always permeate the music itself (Hagen 2011, 194). Nevertheless, bands in Norway have flirted with 'traditional' music in ways that affirm an indigenous Norse cultural nationalism. References to 'indigenous' texts, traditional instruments and recognisable folk melodies were largely eschewed by the earliest wave of black metal musicians in favour of a harsher and amorphous sound (Hagen 2011, 188). However, the emergence of a more concerted focus on Norse or Viking themes and increasing abandonment of some of black metal's more Satanic idioms is reflected in the turn, by some bands, to neotraditionalist folk influences which affix 'true' Nordic identity in particular ways.

The ethnosymbolism of white nationhood hence emerges in both obvious and arcane ways within heavy metal scenes. In a Norwegian context, appeals to a shared cultural heritage can be realised through explicit references—the 1995 album *Nordavind* by Storm, for example, recast traditional Norwegian songs in an extreme metal context. Windir also drew much of their lyrical content from local sagas, deployed traditional folk tunes in their music, and sang in the archaic rural dialect Sognamål. The folk neotradition also emerges through broad interpolations of 'traditional' sounds—

Enslaved end their *Monumension* (2002) album with a track that attempts to reproduce ancient Viking music, for example. Some Norwegian black metal bands demonstrate an affinity with traditional folk in their guitar parts, 'utilising drones and modal melodic figures reminiscent of the style' (Hagen 2011, 185). The heathen revivalist strains of Norwegian metal also appear in more esoteric forms. The common mythologising of the harshness of Ulver's *Nattens Madrigal* (1997) and the oft-repeated legend that it was recorded in the snowy forest[6] echoes the econationalist, anti-modern rhetoric of much Norwegian metal, where nature's pristine beauty and unforgiving brutality are often promoted as part of an idealised Nordic life. The effect of this, I argue, is to position ancient Norse and Germanic cultures as autochthonous by emphasising this relationship to the wilderness—a relationship that, crucially, is only afforded to Norse whiteness. The use of nature and neotraditional themes in the service of national identity does not come without ideological baggage (Hagen 2011, 194). Appropriation of the relationship between indigeneity and land works to enshrine white, Nordic hegemony as the 'true' culture of Norway. The Norwegian black metal scene, which mobilises incendiary rhetoric levelled at Western urban society, multiculturalism and Christianity, channels this dissatisfaction into an 'extended campaign to return Norway to an idealised pagan past' (Hagen 2011, 196).

Attempts to return to an idyllic 'pre-colonial' past for both South Africa and Australia are a much less tenable endeavour. Instead, metal scenes in South Africa and Australia legitimate the position of whiteness through emphasising a link between modern white subjects and a precolonial past. Maps of nationhood are henceforth redrawn in ways that emphasise a community and equal claim to belonging, while simultaneously working to sever indigenous persons from nationhood, and emphasise white sovereignty. This is evident in the largely white scenes of South African metal, which ostensibly aim to show solidarity with a 'proud rainbow nation' (Beeldenstorm in Nandlall 2012) within a wider African context. Across the continent there have been attempts to consolidate 'African' music and tradition within heavy metal: African mythology and folklore are common themes for Botswana's Skinflint (Barnett 2012); Azrail, a death metal band from Cape Town, take their name from the West African Hausa people's god of death. Pre-colonial history is represented much less prominently within the Afrikaans metal scene, despite its claims to unity. Where it does exist, this unification is imagined through the extrapolation of 'traditional' African mythology or references to broader African politics. Melodic death metal band Beeldenstorm's '*Uhuru*' shares its name with the Swahili word for freedom and the Kenyan national day of independence, a term appropriated by the band to critique the paranoid myth of genocide in post-Apartheid white populations (Nandlall 2012). The renewed 'unity' foregrounded by such broadly 'African' themes feels more than slightly tokenistic. This tokenism reflects a trend amongst contemporary South African music; of making allusions, musically or verbally, to Africa, 'but in such a way as to make the continent an abstraction, without real content' (Ballantine 2004, 112). Typically, this is achieved through the use of indistinct, floating signifiers—signs that connote 'Africa'

amorphously, non-specifically' so as to create a 'vague Pan-Africa' (Ballantine 2004, 112). What is perhaps most significant about such attempts at new forms of associations is the desire to forge an ethnicised sense of belonging for whiteness through music. Such associations reiterate the role of Afrikaners (and indeed whiteness itself) in the racial harmony of the Rainbow Nation; just another ethnic group, yet one with a distinct place in the new democracy.

Such abstractions of identity and originary belonging coalesce in the tendency to imbue colonised cultures with a broadly 'mythic' value that relegates indigeneity to antiquity. This mythologising of an Aboriginal presence 'lost' to the ages is a key form through which a precolonial past enters the lexicon of Australian metal music. Attempts to project a distinctly Australian identity, according to Phillipov, are problematic because they fail to indicate 'whether there is anything particularly "Australian" about Australian metal' (2008, 217). Individual bands have deployed 'tropes of Australianness' in their music she argues – for example, indigenous music and lyrical reference to the Australian landscape (2008, 217). Positioning indigenous music as a trope of Australianness is a complex statement that necessitates further interrogation. Representations of Indigeneity within the space of Australian scenes have largely occluded Indigenous people themselves.[7] Where 'Indigenous' themes are broached, they are represented through broad signifiers that are, crucially, performed by white men. Lord, for example, sampled a didgeridoo for the opening track of their album *A Personal Journey* (2003), entitled 'The Dreaming'—also the name given to the varied, incredibly sacred, creation narratives of many Indigenous Australians. Alchemist are notable for their quite prolific use of didgeridoo music, evident in the track 'Austral Spectrum' (*Organasm* 2000). These nominal moves towards reconciliation within the spaces of the scene are immensely problematic. The effect of such simplistic antiquating tropes is to distance an Aboriginal Other from the white enclave of Australian history and culture (Garbutt 2004, 113). These moments of essentialism and antiquation, particularly as they manifest in heavy metal in South Africa and Australia, are complicit in the 'colonial alienation of the person' that denies individual agency (Bhabha in Fanon 1986, x), and reduces colonised cultures to monoliths that become appropriated in the toolbox of musical 'styles'.

Whiteness, Virtuosity and Difference

The systematic stripping of non-whiteness from musical cultures and forms is by no means exclusive to heavy metal. For Hebdige, writing in the context of migrant diasporas in 1970s Britain, 'the succession of white subcultural forms can be read as a series of deep-structural adaptations which symbolically accommodate or expunge the black presence from the host community' (1979, 44). This was a common feature in the development of hard rock and heavy metal, Walser argues, which 'began as a white remake of urban blues that often ripped off black artists and their songs shamelessly' (1993, 17), echoing the wider 'imperative' for much white music-making, namely 'reproducing black culture without the black people in it' (1993, 17).[8] These acts of

appropriation and exclusion bear similarities with Johnston and Lawson's wider discussion of colonial displacement and its implications (2000). The devaluing and erasure of precolonial cultures allowed white settlers to refer to themselves and their own cultural narratives, symbols and traditions as 'indigenous' to this 'new' space. The whitening mechanisms of heavy metal do not enfold within them the same genocidal violence of such colonialist enterprises, but, I argue, nonetheless succeed in dislocating black, or rather non-white ontologies from the field of metal music. Constructing heavy metal as an inherently white genre (see for example Gaines 1990; Arnett 1996; Purcell 2003) allows it to enter a polemic in which 'white' music is contrasted as artistic, complex and developed against the 'natural' or 'bodily' position of 'black' music (Frith 1983, 21). Metal's relatively rigid sense of the body and concern with dominance, Walser argues, reflect European-American transformation of African-American musical materials and, importantly, cultural values (1993, 17). I would interrogate Walser's suggestion that black persons may not be attracted to heavy metal because it has little to offer those communities who may be more 'comfortable with African-American musical traditions' (1993, 17). Gilroy has made the important point that musical heritage has been instrumental in producing a constellation of black subject positions across locales that destabilise the staid essentiality of 'blackness' (1993, 82). It is not as simple as claiming that 'black people just don't like metal', but rather to situate metallic discourses of 'black' and 'white' music (and in turn black and white bodies) within broader debates over the ways in which the global dissemination of 'black' music is reflected in localised traditions of critical writing (Gilroy 1993, 75). Moreover, metal is never situated just in a binary of white and black—there are numerous intersections traversed, each entailing conflicts that are equally prescient. Investigating the scenic practices that 'whiten' metal offer an insight into the ways in which scenes may become spaces that exile non-white presence, and are hence uncomfortable for certain bodies to occupy.

Heavy metal scenes across Norway, South Africa and Australia draw out the relationship between whiteness and mastery by entrenching the dominant narrative position of white maleness within the music itself. Emphasising the superiority of heavy metal's technicality and purity against the idea of a homogenous, bodily, 'black' music canon embeds metal within the dualistic opposites of mind and body that legitimates the devaluation and degradation of non-white cultural heritage. This dualism becomes increasingly apparent through the terms that fans and bands themselves use to describe the music emerging from each national scene. Characterisations of Norwegian black metal are largely bound up in discussions of darkness, grace, complexity and melancholy (see Bansal 2014; Gotrich 2012; O'Malley 1994), marking the particularly Norwegian procession of ethno-national music traditions as unrelentingly disconcerting, nihilistic and discomforting. Afrikaans metal is described with a view to marking it as tough and aggressive, yet expressive and technical (Darkfiend 2014; Nandlall 2012). Australian extreme metal bands are intent on isolating themselves from what they are not (commercial, overly technical,

pretentious) and stress the patriotism, ferocity, brutality and unaffected nature of their music (Haun 2010). There are generic differences that account for some of the disparity across these responses – lengthy progressive metal experiments would likely not be welcomed within an Australian thrash scene that prizes hypermsaculine brutality, for example. The perceptions and characterisations of these scenes nonetheless tie heavy metal to white nationhood in explicit ways. Emphasising the superiority of heavy metal's technicality and purity against the idea of a homogenous, bodily, 'black' music canon embeds metal within the dualistic opposites of mind and body that legitimates the devaluation and degradation of non-white cultural heritage.

The exclusion of non-whiteness from the musical spaces of heavy metal is then not solely achieved through overt hostility, although examples of this are present. Moynihan and Søderlind, for example, note that members of Norway's black metal scene made a point of distancing themselves from rock 'n' roll, arguing that rock's roots in Afro-American culture made it 'alien to white people' (1998, 175). The complexity and melancholy of black metal, it is argued, represents a reclaiming of 'European' musical sensibilities. This rhetoric is reflected in Hellhammer's notorious declaration: 'we don't like black people here. Black metal is for white people' (in Moynihan and Søderlind 1998, 351). South African bands, aside from the broadest conciliatory gestures, have largely ignored the musical dynamics of a country increasingly defining itself as African, and instead pushed for 'white' Afrikaans music divorced from an African history and context. Mind Assault, for example, tellingly distinguish their music from styles which are popular or 'feasible' with the 'ethnic' population (in Ramon 2009). This rhetorical binary operates within a long and problematic history of defining 'black' culture as the antithesis of the 'bourgeois mind' (Frith 1996, 127). Moreover, separating metal music from 'black music' such as blues by celebrating its technicality (as opposed to the 'romantic', 'soulful' or 'rudimentary' lexicon reserved for blues music) makes the implicit gesture of marking bands as white (Pillsbury 2006, 95). This technicality also marks a complex double move between whiteness as intellectual elitism, and whiteness as authentic working-class masculinity. Australian metal has prided itself on unaffected simplicity and strength. The notion of locating some form of 'purity' or 'truth' through heavy metal that is brutal and ferocious finds correlation with older Australian colonial and settler narratives which prize toughness and resilience. Correlating whiteness with strength, intellectualism and virtuosity continues the trajectory of white cultural elitism and enables the ongoing erasure of non-white ontologies from the musicological spaces of heavy metal. When heavy metal scenes invoke such rhetoric, saturated in the central markings of a culture and framed in local terms and symbols, they ensure the continued devaluation of national life that exists outside the parameters of permissible whiteness.

Conclusion

The multiplicity with which national identity is enacted across scenes points to the ways in which whiteness, as a dominant subject position, may be translocated and

translated from one context to another, albeit in fragmentary rather than cohesive ways. The unity that forms in defence of white nationhood, and the divisive rhetoric that precedes such appeals to white victimhood, nonetheless foregrounds the markedly similar ways in which whiteness across all three nations references symbols of white ethno-nationalism. In their most extremist manifestations, calls to protect the sanctity of 'traditional' national identity have resulted in the emergence of extreme right-wing metal groups. Such groups stage this defence of whiteness in much more readily identifiable and deliberate ways. The National Socialist Black Metal of Norway, Aryan Pride Metal in South Africa and Australia's White Power metal movements[9] are underpinned by violent racial rhetoric that depict whiteness as desirable and superior yet under threat from various Others. Such music is deliberately divisive and confronting, violent and encased within the dangerous rhetoric and ideology of white supremacy. Nonetheless, to suggest that racism only exists within such extreme-right wing scenes, and hence divorce it entirely from the scenic structures of heavy metal, would be to discount even the most mundane, seemingly harmless racisms where they do occur. It is then important not to situate white power metal in Norway, South Africa and Australia as the definitive example of the racial politics of the national scene at large, for it most certainly is not, but to come to an understanding of how such extremist manifestations emerge from the tacit valorisations of white identity that shapes every day interactions. Heavy metal gives cultural expression to a white demographic in ways that are ostensibly non-racial, or more explicitly pro-white (Weinstein 2001, 113). I nonetheless contend that the attempt to give whiteness cultural expression is enacted in ways that shroud pro-white sentiment, and in doing so allows for the naturalised dominance of whiteness as it is realised through localised inflections.

The matrix of race, gender, nationhood and music through which both bands and fans have made ideological sense of heavy metal is important for understanding how whiteness within metal unfolds not merely as a demographic category, but as a force of cultural significance (Weinstein 2000, 111). Nonetheless, where Weinstein has argued that this is less an affirmation of whiteness than the by-product of a 'cultural grouping' (2000, 113), I argue that the significance of such whiteness in metal scenes has been affirmed through a continued process of exscription: of non-white bodies, non-white voices, and the racial status of whiteness itself. In Norway, an emphasis on a romantic nationalist link between the self and the North as a means of valorising heritage—and, crucially, heritage foregrounded by whiteness—becomes realised through phantasmic objects of ethnicity. Moreover, such ethnicity becomes entrenched in the monstrous nationalisms that operate within the sites of melancholy, horror and transgression occupied by Norwegian metal. Afrikaans metal utilises the Afrikaans language itself in such a way that it becomes symbolic of Afrikaner resistance, heritage and pride, a problematic correlation in which language is made to bear the burden of Afrikaner identity, and simultaneously subsumes a violent past of repression and disenfranchisement in which language was complicit. Australian metal's glorification

of nationalist masculine archetypes—bushmen, goldminers, soldiers and working-class men - has the dual effect of exalting Australian men as legends while simultaneously crafting a transhistorical essence of 'normal' masculinity that shapes nationalist narratives. Such complex interweavings of elitism, resistance and normophilia establish stringent boundaries of who may claim to belong, both within the space of the scene and the ethnonational territories of these countries. The ethos of heavy metal music at large may operate as an important site of negotiation and resistance for its fans and practitioners. Nonetheless, this ethos also falls back on tired notions of tradition and prejudice that reassert the problematic aspects of white identity rather than reconciling them.

The goal of my research is not only to interrogate metallic whiteness, but to negotiate ways of speaking about whiteness and white masculinity in metal that move beyond discussions of virtuosity and simple demographics, and in doing so come to investigate how the white discourse of metal is realised in contextually specific formations, representations and narrations. Casting the gaze inwards reveals the hidden mechanisms of whiteness, and points to its multiplicity across global scenes. Moving discussions of metal scenes beyond Western Europe and North America provides a necessary disruption to scholarship and popular representation that would cast the genre's fans as overwhelmingly white. Global metal scholarship has done the necessary groundwork of drawing discussions of race in heavy metal out of the black/white binary. What remains crucial is to make visible the whiteness*es* of metal as they unfold external to the United States and United Kingdom in disparate geographical locations. This discussion of metal scenes across Norway, South Africa and Australia hence demonstrates that heavy metal as both a culture and field of academic inquiry must unveil not only whiteness, but whitenesses, and in the course of this, make metallic whiteness not only more visible, but more accountable. In doing so, fans, practitioners and researchers alike can interrogate the white cartology of heavy metal in ways that destabilise and make apparent the invisibilised boundaries of white heteromasculinity that dictate scenic logics; even as scenes continue to unfold around the globe.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. See for example Enslaved's albums *Eld* (1997) and *Blodhemn* (1998), and Storm's *Nordavind* (1995).
2. This becomes a means of staking out fan territories. See for example a review of the album *Swaar Metaal* by the South African heavy metal band KOBUS! In OuroborosSnake: 'this is an essential album if you speak Afrikaans . . . Otherwise, you probably wouldn't like this album that much' (2009).
3. Afrikaans band Half Past H8 recorded a heavy metal version of the Apartheid-era anthem in 2008.

4. The notion of the white man 'under threat' in the 'new' South Africa is a frequent theme in Afrikaans metal. KOBUS! map this in 'Witman' (*Swaar Metaal,* 2007) while Jacques Fourie of Mind Assault states that 'Nobody wants to be a pale male in the new South Africa' (in Ramon, 2009).

5. See the liner notes of Mortal Sin's 1987 album *Mayhemic Destruction,* which centre on the band's specifically local forms of socialisation; more recently Dead Kelly have offered celebrations of such figures on *Sons of the Southern Cross* (2014).

6. This is a rumour refuted by vocalist Garm/Kristoffer Rygg, it has nonetheless gained much circulation.

7. This by no means seeks to erase the contributions of Indigenous persons to the Australian heavy metal community – NoKTuRNL, for example, have been an important part of the music landscape. Rather, I argue that representation of Indigenous Australians within the national metal scene been realised through particularly effacing tactics.

8. remain mindful here of the very real potential for essentialism that emerges through Walser's statements; while they are useful for the purposes of expediency, such wide-reaching appraisals of 'black culture' work to fix problematic strictures of 'essence' and 'affect' to black subjectivities in ways that negate agency and diversity.

9. See for example Ilse Koch; Krigsrop (Norway), Volkmag (South Africa) and Axis of Blood; Death's Head (Australia).

References

Alchemist. 2000. 'Austral Spectrum'. Track 1, *Organasm*. Victoria: Displeased Records.

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities.* London: Verso.

Arnett, Jeffrey J. 1996. *Metalheads.* Colorado: Westview Press.

Ballantine, Christopher. 2004. 'Re-thinking "whiteness"? Identity, change and "white" popular music in post-apartheid South Africa'. *Popular Music* 23 (2): 105–31.

Bansal, Andrew. 2014. 'In-depth interview with Ivar Bjornson of Enslaved'. *Metal Assault*. Accessed 21 April, 2015. http://metalassault.com/Interviews/2014/02/19/in-depth-interview-with-ivar-bjornson-of-enslaved/

Barnett, Errol. 2012. 'Rebels with a cause: Botswana's heavy metal heads'. *CNN*, July 4. Accessed 23 April, 2015. http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/29/world/africa/botswana-heavy-metal-heads

Bayer, Gerd. 2009. 'Rocking the Nation: One Global Audience, One Flag?' in *Heavy Metal Music in Britain*, ed. Gerd Bayer, 181-94. Surrey: Ashgate.

Beeldenstorm. 2011. 'Uhuru'. 28 September. Accessed 23 April, 2015. https://facebook.com/photo.php?v=10150394515706397

Bennett, Andy, and Richard A. Peterson. 2004. 'Introducing Music Scenes'. In *Music Scenes: Local, Translocal and Virtual*, eds. Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson, 1-16. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Berger, Harris M. 2010. *Stance: ideas about emotion, style, and meaning for the study of expressive culture*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1986. 'Foreword'. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, by Frantz Fanon, vii-xxv. London: Pluto Press.

Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism.* London: Sage.

DarkFiend. 2014. 'Mind Assault Call "Mag Verkrag"' *Metal 4 Africa.* Accessed 20 April 2015. http://metal4africa.com/news/mind-assault-call-mag-verkrag/

Dead Kelly. 2014. *Sons of the Southern Cross*, Queensland: Independently released.

Delgado, Richard and Stefancic, Jean. 1996. *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Enslaved. 1997. *Eld*. Bergen: Osmose.

Enslaved. 1998. *Blodhemn*. Ludvika: Osmose.

Enslaved. 2001. *Monumension*. Bergen: Osmose.

Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Gaines, Donna. 1990. *Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia's dead end kids*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Garbutt, Robert. 2004. 'White on White: Surveying the boundaries of local whiteness'. In *Placing Race and Locating Whiteness,* eds. Susanne Schech and Ben Wadham, 104-22. Adelaide: Flinders Press.

Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness.* London: Verso.

Gotrich, Lars. 2012. 'Song Premiere: Enslaved, 'Thoughts Like Hammers''', *NPR Music*, 8 August. Accessed 20 April 2015. http://www.npr.org/blogs/allsongs/2012/08/08/158219619/song-premiere-enslaved-thoughts-like-hammers

Fischer-Giffin, Brian. 2008. *The Encyclopedia of Australian Heavy Metal*. San Bernardino: Lulu.

Frith, Simon. 1983. *Sound Effects*. USA: Pantheon Books.

Frith, Simon. 1996. *Performing Rites: On the value of popular music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hagen, Ross. 2011. 'Musical Style, Ideology, and Mythology in Norwegian Black Metal'. In *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World*, eds. Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene, 180-99. Durham: Duke University Press.

Half Past H8. 2008. 'Die Stem'. Accessed 23 April 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m3hJ-6e21-c

Haun, Josh. 2010. 'Metal scene report: Australia'. *Invisible Oranges,* 13 August. Accessed 23 April 2015. http://www.invisibleoranges.com/2010/08/metal-scene-report-australia/

Hebdige, Dick. 1979. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style.* London: Routledge.

Hjelm, Titus, Keith Kahn-Harris and Mark LeVine. 2013. 'Introduction: Heavy metal as controversy and counterculture'. In *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures,* eds. Titus Hjelm, Keith Kahn-Harris and Mark LeVine, 1–14. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing.

Hochhauser, Sharon. 2011. 'The Marketing of Anglo-Identity in the North American Hatecore Metal Industry'. In *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World,* eds. Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene, 161-79. Durham: Duke University Press.

Johnston, Anna and Alan Lawson. 2000. 'Settler Colonies'. In *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies,* eds. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray, 360-76. Carlton: Blackwell.

Kahn-Harris, Keith. 2007. *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge.* New York: Berg.

Kobus! 2007. 'Witman'. Track 2, *Swaar Metal.* Cape Town: Rhythm.

Lord. 2003. 'The Dreaming'. Track 1, *A Personal Journey.* Victoria: Modern Invasion Music.

Moore, Allan. 2002. 'Authenticity as Authentication'. *Popular Music* 21(2): 209-23.

Mortal Sin. 1987. *Mayhemic Destruction*, London: Vertigo.

Moynihan, Michael and Didrik Søderlind. 1998. *Lords of Chaos: The bloody rise of the Satanic metal underground*. Los Angeles: Feral House.

Nandlall, Lav. 2012. 'South Africa Metal: Beeldenstorm'. *Heavy Metal* Duchess, 2 March. Accessed 23 April 2015.
https://heavymetalduchess.wordpress.com/2012/03/02/south-africa-metal-beeldenstorm/

O'Malley, Stephen [ed., sole author]. 1994. *Descent Magazine,* 1.

OuroborousSnake. 2009. 'It's metal in Afrikaans bru!' *Encyclopaedia Metallum: The Metal Archives*, 9 April. Accessed 23 April 2015.
http://www.metalarchives.com/reviews/Kobus!/Swaar_Metaal/152867/

Overell, Rosemary T. 2014. *Affective Intensities in Extreme Music Scene: Cases from Australia and Japan.* Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Phillipov, Michelle. 2008. 'Metal "Downunderground": Mapping the terrain of the Great Southern wasteland'. In *Sounds of Then, Sounds of Now – Popular Music in Australia,* eds. Shane Homan and Tony Mitchell, 215-30. Hobart: ACYC Publishing.

Pillsbury, Glenn. T. 2006. *Damage Incorporated.* New York: Routledge.

Purcell, Natalie. 2003. *Death Metal Music: The Passion and Politics of a Subculture.* North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc.

Ramon. 2009. 'Mind Assault'. *Lords of Metal ezine.* Accessed 23 April 2015.
http://www.lordsofmetal.nl/nl/interviews/view/id/3022

Spracklen, Karl. 2013. *Whiteness and Leisure.* Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Storm. 1995. *Nordavind*. Oslo: Moonfog.

Thompson, Karenlee. 2007. 'The Australian Larrikin: CJ Dennis's [Un] sentimental Bloke'. *Antipodes* 21(2): 177-83.

Twine, France W. and Gallagher, Charles. 2008. 'The future of whiteness: A map of the "third wave"'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(1): 4-24.

Ulver. 1997. *Nattens Madrigal – Aatte Hymne Til Ulven I Manden*. Nordrhein-Westfalen: Century Media.

Wallach, Jeremy, Harris M.Berger and Paul D.Greene. 2011. 'Affective Overdrive, Scene Dynamics, and Identity in the Global Metal Scene'. In *Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World,* eds. by Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger and Paul D. Greene, 3-33. Durham: Duke University Press.

Walser, Robert. 1993. *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

Weinstein, Deena. (1991) 2000. *Heavy Metal: The Music and Its Culture*. Revised Edition. Massachusetts: Da Capo Press.

Wilson, Scott. 2010. 'From Forests Unknown: Eurometal and the Political/Audio Unconscious'. In *Metal Void: First Gatherings*, ed. by Niall R.W Scott, 149-59. Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.