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**ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO SOUND:
MUSIC, INTERCULTURALITY AND THE (TRANS)FORMATION OF THE
SELF IN DESEGREGATION ERA LOS ANGELES**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SOCIOLOGY

by

Darren James Willett

September 2017

The Dissertation of Darren James Willett is
approved:

Professor Eric Porter, Ph.D., chair

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Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

All that Is Solid Melts into Sound: Music, Interculturality and the (Trans)Formation of the Self in Desegregation Era Los Angeles

Darren James Willett

This dissertation takes a social psychological approach to critical race and cultural studies as it makes use of in-depth interviews and archival data to draw relationships between the personal accounts of musicians who were inducted into the Los Angeles Unified School District's desegregation effort and the broader sociohistorical context of desegregation within which these accounts were experienced. Specifically, this project explores how youths who attended desegregated schools in the 1980s and 1990s used music to navigate new forms of intercultural social interactions. At times, this meant employing racialized genres to reaffirm intra-communal solidarity and/or subvert the coupling of such genres with racialized bodies, while at others, youths engaged a cross-cultural politics to explore new identities, thus expanding upon existing notions of self, community and cultural belonging. In this sense, music became a site wherein categories of sameness and difference were both erected and obscured. A primary focus of this dissertation is to explore how new forms of social interactions made possible during this era prompted unique (trans)formations of the self among youths who attended desegregated schools, and how these youths took these (trans)formations, and their music, from the schoolyard to the stage as they cultivated intercultural musical scenes that coevolved with the ideological, political and economic currents of the time. In so doing, these musical scenes engaged a cross-cultural politics that began to unsettle the institutions and ideologies of racial segregation and white supremacy, and helped to actively construct the

new possibilities, and communities, that emerged during desegregation era Los Angeles. An overarching concern of the dissertation, however, is how this transformative potential has since been repackaged by politicians, policy makers, and both public and private institutions within the city to manufacture the façade of a post-racial American metropolis in a city that continues to be fraught with segregation and racial inequality. As such, contemporary Los Angeles harbors a contradictory and perplexed engagement with multiculturalism that has left racial politics within the city teetering between hope and despair.

Acknowledgements

Quite literally, it takes a village to produce a dissertation, and I wish to take a moment here to express deep gratitude to my village of advisors, mentors, interviewees, friends, and family members who, in various ways, offered me the support necessary to make this dissertation possible.

First and foremost, I wish to thank the chair of my dissertation committee, Professor Eric Porter, for his generosity, his insights, and his willingness to oversee my work. His discussions with me concerning music and interculturality helped me hone my focus on the bands and scenes explored herein, and guided me as I placed them within a broader historical and sociological lineage of intercultural music from Los Angeles. Additionally, his assertion that the ways in which musicians speak about their work has gone largely underexplored encouraged me to push my interviewees' recounts against theories developed by scholars who write about them, and to level my gaze at the active role musicians play in the construction of those possibilities that parameterize the social world – a focus that laid the groundwork for the theoretical and analytical framework herein. Moreover, his close readings of draft upon draft of each chapter offered innumerable critical insights that allowed me to confront the unique limitations and potentials within my own perspective, and afforded me the opportunity to mature intellectually in ways I had not previously imagined. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, he coached me on how to take on the immense workload of teaching, research and writing a dissertation all while raising two children.

I also wish to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Herman Gray and Julie Bettie, both of whom inspired me to level my gaze at the workings of power within popular culture, and, in so doing, influenced my work in unique and specific ways. Herman Gray pushed me to consider the ways being born into desegregation era Los Angeles had caused me to take multiculturalism for granted. This suggestion moved me away from the reductive coupling of multiculturalism with disingenuousness, and allowed me to realize that within the shift in racial politics that defined desegregation era Los Angeles was something more complex and thus worthy of study. He also encouraged me to think beyond the simplistic perception of popular culture as a mere representation running parallel to the social world, which allowed me to better hear the ways in which my interviewees and their music helped to construct the new possibilities and communities that emerged during desegregation era Los Angeles. Moreover, Herman Gray's suggestion that the music industry was more fragile than I had come to believe softened me enough to interrogate the multifaceted relationship between political economy and intercultural musical scenes, a relationship upon which I had soured as a professional musician in Los Angeles. Julie Bettie's emphasis on popular culture as a site that both reifies and destabilizes systems of power and oppression have had an obvious impact on my own research. Moreover, her keen use of interview data and ethnographic practices in her own work provided a model of research excellence toward which I aspired. Additionally, her suggestion that the most important sociological findings emerge from the exceptions, not the rules, allowed me to focus on the emancipatory potentials of the cultural work

performed by those who defy conventional modes of expression. Without both of their encouragements, I fear I would have simply become subsumed by the overwhelming resilience of systems of oppression.

I also feel an exceptional gratitude for Dr. Wendy Martyna who served as my teaching mentor during my doctoral studies, and helped me cultivate a unique combination of intellectual expectation and emotional compassion. I particularly wish to thank her for introducing me to Social Psychology, and helping me understand that my lifelong commitments to social justice could be furthered by conducting research anchored within this field. The theoretical dispositions of Social Psychology allowed me use interview data to do the work of the sociologist – to connect personal experiences with broader sociohistorical phenomena – and drove the methodological and analytical bases for this dissertation.

I have also been able to make meaningful connections with great thinkers outside of my home institution. Dr. Rickey Vincent was one of the first people to provide me with the theoretical tools that would become central to this dissertation as he helped me hone my focus as an undergraduate instructor at UC Berkeley. His insights pushed me to more thoroughly interrogate the relationship between US racial politics and the production and consumption of musical forms, and the ways in which I, personally, was positioned and implicated within these interrogations. Additionally, Professor Jocelyne Guilbault's work on Trinidad's Carnival musics and the construction of Trinidadian national identity inspired me to formulate the concept of "(trans)formation." The discussions she generously engaged with me provided

affirmation that this was indeed a productive lens through which to conceptualize identity formation, and afforded me the confidence to make this concept a framing device for this dissertation. Her work also forced me to sit with the uncomfortable notion that neoliberalism could actually function as a catalyst for grass roots musical production, a premise that was counterintuitive as I had always coupled neoliberalism with the inevitable outcome of increased social inequality. I also wish to thank Matthew Markovoich who offered me countless hours of musical discussions over the last decade or so. Most specifically, he helped me apply the biological theory of “coevolution” to sociological research, thus bridging two fields that have historically been ideologically opposed due to the overly simplistic “Nature vs. Nurture” binary.

Of course, I owe an insurmountable debt of gratitude to my wife, Melanie Willett, for enduring the frequently uncertain and always demanding obligations of graduate study. She stuck with me even when it seemed there was no end in sight, and consistently strategized ways to help me achieve every milestone on route to my doctoral degree. Moreover, her growth as an intersectional feminist and an activist has been a continuous source of inspiration, while her incredible gift with photography has shown me how, in many ways, imagery can perform the work of the sociologist long after the word has done its do. And to my parents, Sue and Greg Willett, I owe the deepest gratitude for giving me life and love throughout the sometimes tumultuous, but always endearing, life-long journey that culminates in the pages that follow. They have both been a continuous source of compassion, understanding, inspiration and intellectual growth. Without their guidance and

support, this dissertation would never have made it onto the page. I also wish to thank my children, Jasmine Willett and Traves Willett, for allowing me to feel more deeply. The songs they sing, the games they play, and the lives they improvise remind me of the infinite ways in which music and hope are inextricably bound.

Finally, I wish to thank Octavio Camacho, Clinton Cameron, Joey Derusha, Brandon Peterson, Devon Jackson-Kali, Raymond Thomas, Javier Mosley, Grace Umali, Ulises Bella, Emile Porée, Emerson Cardenas, Justin Porée, Lonnie Marshall, Geoff “Double G” Gallegos, Jordan Levine, Rich Owens and Josh Levy for agreeing to be interviewed for this project. Collectively, their recounts drove the arguments, established the stakes, and parameterized the scope of this dissertation. I am extremely grateful for the generosity and honesty they shared with me as they talked me through their experiences with music and race in Los Angeles. Without them, there would have been no tale to tell.

Preface

I remember my first day of kindergarten like it was yesterday. It was September of 1980. My best friend, Josh, and I walked into the kindergarten room at Community School, a public magnet located one block west of Fairfax Boulevard on Airdrome Street—a sort of midpoint between a virtually all-black neighborhood to the south and east and a virtually all-white one to the north and west. I was nervous, but was trying to act cool. The teacher instructed Josh and me to put our bags in a cabinet, which I did with a sort of reckless toss in an attempt to appear tough. Josh was the only person I knew in the class. Nobody else from my neighborhood was there. It was a completely foreign environment.

I did not know it then, but this experience was the beginning of a journey that culminates in the pages that follow. As I entered the kindergarten room on that day in 1980, I was being inducted into the newly-established desegregation effort of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), which had been mandated by both the Los Angeles Superior Court and the California Supreme Court. Until this point, I had spent my days at home in my upper middle class neighborhood on the Westside, or in a virtually all-white preschool down the street from my home. In both of these spaces, I had been surrounded by kids whose experiences with racial and class privilege were relatively the same as my own. It would take a couple of years and several specific encounters with other students who did not share my upper middle class white privilege for all of this to become clear to me, but by that point, I no

longer felt like a foreigner in this environment. Despite being surrounded by kids whose upbringing was so different from my own, I had grown to feel at home in the desegregated schools, and the more I was confronted with cultural difference, the more natural integrated environments became for me. As difference became familiar, interculturality became naturalized, and, barring my sophomore year of high school, I would remain in schools that were formed as part of the desegregation effort for the rest of my grade school experience.

This is not to say that the desegregated schoolyards were some utopic space of racial harmony. For every endearing or productive connection I made with somebody across the tracks (or across the freeways in LA's terms), there was another, more tumultuous encounter that arose from those same differences. As an upper middle class white male in schools where whites were in the numeric minority, and upper middle class whites comprised a small fraction of the student body, I was offered the immensely powerful and unique experience of becoming privy at a young age to the resentment many people felt toward white folks—a resentment rooted in the historical atrocities of European expansionism and domination that had rendered me the beneficiary of privileges from which most others on the schoolyard had been excluded. Some people I met on those schoolyards became my life-long allies as they were tolerant of my naiveté, and coached me on the workings of white privilege. I am forever grateful to these folks for being patient and generous with me, for this was a gift that slowly began to dissolve my ignorance on such matters, and initiated the focus of my life's work. Still others were not so patient and chose to act upon their

resentment with violence. Oddly enough, I am also thankful to these folks because, although they put me through a school of hard knocks so to speak, their honesty and aggression nevertheless pushed me to reflect on the root of their anger, a process that further unraveled my lack of knowledge about the historical workings of white supremacy, matters about which I would have otherwise remained either ignorant or in denial. My experience in the desegregated schools afforded me the cultural strength to *resist* this form of ignorance and denial from very early on, and my life's work—to combat social inequality by disrupting the workings of white supremacy in US society—has been based upon this *resistance*.

Of course, diversity alone offers no promises. Diversity has just as easily led to riots as it has to cross cultural connections and understandings. As Joey Derusha, one of my interviewees, poignantly noted, “You can have diversity. It does not necessarily create interculturalism. Diversity does not create interculturalism *by itself*. It could create riots. There has to be something highlighting the beneficial connections between diverse elements” (Derusha 2013). This is where music enters this story of desegregation era Los Angeles. As far back as I can remember, musical fluency endowed me with a powerful cross-cultural repertoire that helped me establish common ground with folks who had been raised in settings both geographically and culturally distinct from my own upbringing. This common ground comprised a cultural fluency that allowed me to establish intercultural interpersonal relationships *and* diffuse some of the racial antagonisms that played out on the schoolyard and within the city on the daily. Whether it was memorizing all the

lyrics to Run DMC's latest album and reciting them on call on the schoolyard (this was the early 80s, just prior to hip hop's mainstream crossover to white neighborhoods in LA), or laying down bass lines at Southern Baptist churches in Crenshaw district, or playing the upright bass in bands that blended funk, Afro-Cuban, klezmer and gospel traditions at synagogues, churches and festivals throughout the city, musical fluency always gave me a certain amount of respect within communities that had otherwise – and understandably – treated me with suspicion. When it became apparent that nearly all of my interviewees had also been inducted into the desegregation effort at a young age, I realized that this experience with music forging the basis for intercultural connections and alliances on desegregated schoolyards was an experience many shared with me. I thus began to place the rise of the intercultural music scenes that form the focus of this dissertation within the context of desegregation.

Although the desegregation effort was far from perfect, sometimes even condemned as a complete failure, the fact remains that, for the first time in Los Angeles' history, young people were offered a large-scale, state-sanctioned opportunity to weave a precedent for interculturality into the social fabric of a city historically fraught with blatant, outright, legally-sanctioned racial segregation. This dissertation explores this metropolitan convergence of cultures while placing a particular emphasis on the ways in which these youths made use of music to navigate new forms of intercultural encounters. Hence, the schoolyards, and later on, the intercultural music scenes engaged by people who had attended the desegregated

schools, functioned as sites where youths used music to creatively make sense of new forms of intercultural social interactions and to undergo unique (trans)formations of self (a term that will be defined at length below) within the context of desegregation. In so doing, as I lay out in subsequent chapters, music served as a tool to engage a cross-cultural politics, one which provided the potential to both reaffirm intra-community solidarity *and* expand upon existing notions of community and cultural belonging. And many of the participants in these scenes did this almost intuitively, because interculturality had been naturalized for them at a young age, and was thus a starting point for community building, rather than a goal to achieve.

*Just like the cities
That stagger on the coastline
In a nation that just can't stand much more
Like the forest buried beneath the highway
Never had a chance to grow...*

*And I see the robins
Perched in barren treetops
Watching last-ditch racists marching across the floor
But just like the peace sign that vanished in our dreams
Never had a chance to grow...*

*And now it's winter
It's winter in America
~ Gil Scott-Heron*

Introduction

In 1970, Judge Alfred Gitelson of the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled that the LASUD operated separate and unequal facilities, and would be required by state law to integrate the schools within its district. This ruling not only prompted the effort to desegregate the city's public schools, but also began to set the terms for what would become Los Angeles' perplexed and contradictory engagement with multiculturalism. Undoubtedly, the desegregation effort was beset with assimilationist tendencies that perpetuated the very institutionalized discrimination it sought to undo – a hindrance that constitutes the focus of most scholarly works on the effort. Without ignoring this limitation, this dissertation develops a more intimate analysis of the desegregation effort as it levels its gaze at the youths whose selves were (trans)formed, and the music that was composed, during the desegregation era. In so doing, this work situates music as a site wherein a more nuanced engagement

with desegregation occurred, one which grappled with the dissonance produced by the utopic vision of racial unity and the persistence of racial inequality that came to define this era. Confronted with the potentials and limitations of an era marked by the city's shift from legally-sanctioned segregation to the institutionalization of multiculturalism, youths used music to actively construct the new possibilities, and communities, that emerged during desegregation era Los Angeles.

Methods

This dissertation takes a social psychological approach to critical race and cultural studies. While it is predominantly a qualitative sociology project based upon open-ended interview data and oral histories, it also makes use of archival research and quantitative data to place interviewees' accounts within the context of broader macrosociological and macroeconomic phenomena. Additionally, the trends in the interview data identified through an interdisciplinary analytical framework intervene in conversations within the fields of sociology, psychology, cultural studies, and ethnic studies.

I began this project by setting up interviews with LA-based musicians who were members of intercultural ensembles around the time of the Los Angeles Uprising of 1992. My aim was to explore, how, if at all, intercultural ensembles within the city addressed the racial tensions that came to a boil following the acquittal of the four Los Angeles police officers who brutally beat Rodney King. After having

conducted several interviews, however, I came to realize that all of my interviewees, whether I had previously known them or not, had attended desegregated schools, and that, in many instances, the bands and scenes of which they had been a part had been forged through interpersonal networks established on desegregated schoolyards. I realized then that this story was not about music and musicians' responses to the 1992 Uprising. Rather, it was one of music, interculturality, and desegregation.

As musicians' testimony began to refocus this research within the context of desegregation, the methodology was reformulated within a sort of *grounded theory*. Although I acknowledge the limitations of the ideas posed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their work outlining this theory of methodological practice – particularly the failure to acknowledge how a researcher's personal experience and value systems potentially affect their findings – I nevertheless attempted to allow my interviewees' accounts to drive the narrative at many points throughout the research process. This was a particularly valuable practice for this work because the content and subject matter were so close to my own experience. Although the cultural fluency I shared with my interview subjects made the research more fluid and productive at times, the closeness of the subject matter also meant that I had to listen more closely for the ways in which my interviewees' narratives contradicted my own experiences. I thus moved forward with an *ideal typology* of grounded theory – that we must let research findings arrive from the data – but one that carried with it the acknowledgment that it is never entirely possible to remove our own biases from the research process. This awareness, I believe, allowed me to minimize the shadow that such biases cast upon

the research process, and allowed for the emergence of findings and intellectual work beyond what I imagined this dissertation would encompass and entail. This sort of critical adherence to grounded theory allowed for many intellectual “surprises” to emerge along this journey, and the very scope of this project is framed by one of these surprises: I did not set out to write about music and desegregation. It was my interviewees who began to tell this story, so I had to open myself up to placing intercultural music from this era within the context of desegregation in order to allow this research to unfold.

Once it became clear that the story my interviewees were telling was one of music, interculturality and desegregation, I began to search for a reliable archive that would tell the story of the desegregation of the LAUSD from the perspective of those who carried out the effort. My aim was to gain a historical understanding of the conditions under which the desegregation effort was mandated, and the ways in which multiculturalism was perceived by the courts and the school board – the two predominant entities that oversaw the effort. My goal here was to use this data as a historical backdrop for the experiences conveyed by my interviewees, and to then explore how their experiences realized, challenged, exceeded, and/or provided a critique for the stated ambitions of the desegregation effort. Fortunately, the University of California Los Angeles has archived the various materials—meeting minutes, proposed integration plans, demographic surveys, and so on—gathered by the monitoring committee appointed by Superior Court Judge Paul Egly to oversee and evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the desegregation effort. I made

particular use of five boxes of local journalistic coverage of the effort. I used this data as a framing device to map the historical process of the court's desegregation effort, the rhetorical framing of race and racism during the desegregation era, and the varying perspectives surrounding both the court's approach to desegregating the district and the general premise of achieving racial equality through desegregation.

Although the focus of the dissertation had shifted from intercultural music following the 1992 Uprising to music, interculturality and desegregation, I decided not to alter the criteria concerning who would qualify as an interview subject. I simply continued to reach out to musicians who had played in intercultural ensembles during the early 90s, for these musicians had come of age during the desegregation era. My intention was to allow the story to unfold through musicians who had engaged interculturality through their musical practices during this era, rather than limiting this narrative to those who had attended desegregated schools. Although the data I collected does not justify the sweeping claim that all intercultural music scenes in Los Angeles during this era formed through social networks that had been established on the desegregated schoolyards, it is curious to note that, without being targeted for school affiliation, but rather for participation in intercultural bands and scenes, nearly all of my interviewees attended schools established through, or incorporated into, the desegregation effort. Another finding that further validated reframing the project within the context of desegregation occurred as interview data revealed that Ozomatli (a band central to this research) and Peace Pipe (a primary scene explored herein) were formed through interpersonal networks established on

desegregated schoolyards. As I had initially set out to interview members of this band and scene while the project was still framed as an exploration into music following the 1992 Uprising, this finding constituted another “surprise” that emerged from the data.

In all, I conducted seventeen interviews. I framed the interviews as oral histories in order to allow interviewees the freedom to tell their stories on their own terms, rather than influencing their accounts with a predetermined set of questions. This further allowed room for their responses to drive the narrative and help shape the focus of the dissertation, and limited my ability to solicit certain types of answers and experiences. With this said, I did push them to discuss their experiences with race and racialization, the schools they had attended, the ensembles in which they had played, their memories of music scenes in the 1980s and 1990s, and their family histories, particularly relating to how and where they had come to reside in Los Angeles. In addition, I probed them to speak further about topics, musics, and scenes that other interviewees had also addressed, and about areas where their narratives challenged or affirmed my own assumptions on various matters. A typical interview lasted two hours, with the shortest lasting one hour and the longest lasting six.

Although I had an idea of some of the musicians I wanted to contact from the outset of the project, I also took notes as interviewees spoke of their interpersonal networks in an effort to map these networks and build my interview pool. I particularly targeted musicians whose names came up in multiple interviews. This practice was pertinent to and appropriate for this particular research because much of

the project focused on mapping the interpersonal networks that had led to the formation of the intercultural bands and scenes in which I was interested. In this sense, the process of recruiting interviewees perfectly mirrored the practice of using these interviews to map the intercultural networks that would form the premise for this dissertation.

When I had completed roughly fourteen of the interviews, I began listening to the recordings I had made of the interviews, while taking notes in order to map the content and time stamp random moments. The time stamps provided a point of reference that enabled me to more easily return to specific quotes, which I would later transcribe and use verbatim during the writing process. The notes of the content allowed me to code the data and identify trends across the accounts of multiple interviewees. Identifying these trends allowed me to formulate arguments, frame the chapters, and put the interviewees in dialogue with each other as well as extant literature, archival data and historical occurrences. I then used several databases to verify the accuracy of my interviewees' accounts and to place their experiences within the broader historical, macrosociological and maroeconomic processes that came to define the political environment of 1980s and 1990s Los Angeles. These databases included news articles, 2010 US Census Data, 2010-2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year and 5-year estimates data, 2016 National Assets Scorecard for Communities of Color (NACSS) data, other existing literature, and various materials from the archive compiled by the monitoring committee appointed by Judge Egly. Ultimately, I used the interview data to frame the chapters (and the

dissertation more broadly) and to formulate the arguments that would justify this framing, and I used archival data and extant scholarly literature to connect the microsociological accounts of my interviewees to the macrosociological contexts (such as white supremacy, desegregation, and the rise of colorblind ideology, celebratory multiculturalism, neoliberalism and Regan-era backlash politics) within which these accounts were experienced.

The Social Psychological – or Microsociological – Approach

Over the four years that I taught the course “Social Psychology” from the perspective of a sociologist, I began to use the terms social psychology and microsociology interchangeably. Each year, I would begin the course by asking students how sociology and psychology differed, how they were similar, and if they perceived any overlap between the two disciplines. During a lecture one year, I was discussing the development of theories concerning the formation of the self, when a student, who was studying to become a behavioral therapist, commented that I was taking a macro approach to psychology. This was striking to me because I considered my scholarly work to be rooted in a micro approach to sociology. I have since come to understand social psychology as this overlap between the two disciplines – a field where macropsychology and microsociology converge.

With this said, the field of social psychology is practiced very differently depending on whether it is approached from a psychological or sociological

perspective (Cahill and Sandstrom 2011). Whereas a psychologist may focus on child development and the moment an infant becomes cognizant of its own existence, or of its *self* (Lacan 1949), a sociologist may choose to study how that self's development is affected as it becomes gendered and/or racialized (Carter 2006; Thorne 1986; Van Ausdale and Feagin 2001). Social Psychology can take on intimate situations such as interactions between an infant and a caretaker, or it can level its focus more broadly at how individuals and groups, for example, reproduce and challenge social hierarchies through everyday interactions. However, whether observing children at play (Mead 1962; Van Ausdale and Feagin 2001), researching whether people with corporate logo tattoos have been duped by the consumer culture of late capitalism (Orend and Gagnè 2009), or interviewing musicians who attended desegregated public schools in Los Angeles during the 1980s and 1990s, one constant holds throughout the field of social psychology: the primacy of social interaction in the formation of the self.

This dissertation, then, makes use of interview data to assess how youths inducted into the desegregation effort used music to navigate new forms of social interactions, and how these interactions affected their (trans)formations of the self. In so doing, I aim to assess how, if at all, music enabled youths during the desegregation era to expand upon existing notions of cultural belonging, and if these new forms of community were effective in combatting racial antagonisms within the city and/or unsettling, in any way, the legacy of white supremacy and segregation upon which the Los Angeles racial order had been established. I ask these questions

in an attempt to reopen a book that seems to have already been shut when the media and academics condemn the desegregation of the LAUSD as a complete failure. Having attended integrated schools in the LAUSD for nearly my entire grade school experience, it always seemed to me that something was lost in this pronouncement of complete failure. I was convinced that a different perspective could be developed by exploring the recollections of the students who attended those schools, with particular attention to how musical practices provided “beneficial connections between diverse elements” that helped them navigate the cultural differences and racial divisions they encountered on the schoolyards and beyond (Derusha 2013).

To date, one of the few works to explicitly explore intercultural popular music that emerged via social interactions that occurred as a result of the LAUSD’s desegregation effort is *Everyday Sunshine: The Story of Fishbone*. Laurence Fishburne, the narrator of the film, frames its focus as follows:

With the black community walled off by a growing network of concrete freeways, and educational opportunities worsening for inner city youth, a growing movement called for the integration of the Los Angeles school system. After a ruling by the California Supreme Court, black kids from South Central were bussed to the white suburban Valley. Amid this *collision of cultures* and musical influences emerged a band that would change the face of rock and roll (italics my emphasis) (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

While *Everyday Sunshine* levels its gaze at one specific program within the desegregation effort (Permits with Transportation [PWT]), this dissertation focuses more broadly on PWT *and* the magnet program – the two longest-running programs that came to define the desegregation effort. Additionally, while Fishburne’s description of Fishbone evokes a band emerging from the ashes of a “collision of

cultures,” this dissertation frames the new forms of intercultural encounters that occurred on the schoolyards (and beyond), and the music that emerged via these encounters (including the music of Fishbone), as having a multifaceted set of potential outcomes. Without ignoring the historical conditions of desegregation that did indeed produce intercultural “collisions” and saw racial violence plague the schoolyards, this dissertation also places emphasis on the dynamics of musical practices that provided a framework to work through the racial histories and antagonisms responsible for these collisions, and thus, at times, provided more emancipatory outcomes than the concept of a “collision” implies.

(Trans)Formation of the Self

Much of this dissertation builds upon social psychological theories concerning the primacy of social interaction in the formation of the self. The underlying premise of this theoretical position is that an individual’s sense of self is formed by utilizing an external frame of reference that positions the self within a broader context of “others” with whom the individual comes into social contact. That is, we come to know ourselves in relation to other people. In this line of reasoning, it can be argued, there is no authentic self other than the one we cultivate through our social interactions. Mead (1962) explains this external reference through which we come to know ourselves as the “generalized other.” Mead contends that humans have the ability to take the role of the other – to imagine what it is like to interpret the world through other people’s perspectives. We use this ability to construct an imagined

“generalized other” – a combination of the people who are significant to us and how we imagine their perceptions of us. It is through the construction of this “generalized other” that we come to know and form our own sense of self. Elsewhere, Shibutani (1955) maintains that as we go through life, we develop a series of these generalized others, which he refers to as reference groups. These reference groups are subgroups within society whose perspectives an individual uses. Reference groups are not only used as external references through which individuals define their sense of self, but are also perspectives through which we imbue meaning upon the social world and define what we come to see as reality. As Charon (2010) notes, “What we see as reality is really a result of the perspectives we take on through social interaction” (6). Hence, social psychologically speaking, we form our perception of reality through the very social interactions that we use to form our sense of self. It is through these social interactions, then, that we formulate our understandings of identity categories such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and political and religious affiliations, and assimilate ourselves – or resist assimilating – into these categories.

This dissertation builds upon theories of the formation of the self, particularly as these selves become racialized, by placing these psychological formations within the context of ongoing sociohistorical processes. In so doing, this dissertation introduces the concept of the *(trans)formation of the self*. Put simply, the idea of *(trans)formation* alludes to the notion that all *formations* are actually *transformations* of what came before and precursors to those *transformations* that come next. Thus, anything perceived as a “new” *formation* is instead a *(trans)formation* held in flux by

the circumstances under which it emerged, and those it helps create through its emergence. Hence, selves are (trans)formed not only in relation to those people with whom the self comes into social contact, but also in relation to the ongoing historical processes within which these social interactions occur. The concept of (trans)formation thus places this research more firmly within sociological understandings of the individual as a sociohistorically constructed being, and, in so doing, avoids the pitfalls of atemporality and ahistoricity that often result from the universalizing tendencies of more psychological approaches to identity formation. Conversely, as much of this research is based upon an archive of memories composed of in-depth oral histories that speak to the interplay between family, school, interpersonal relationships, music, and the sociohistorical legacies of the Los Angeles racial order, this work also brings a psychological intimacy to more sociological understandings of identity formation that tend not account for the role that psychologies produced through interpersonal relationships and social interactions play in the evolution of broader sociohistorical phenomena. Hence, through a sociological lens complemented with a psychological intimacy, this dissertation demonstrates how the (trans)formation of the self is necessarily political as individual's senses of self cultivate cultural identities and group memberships that both reify and destabilize institutional and ideological systems of power and oppression.

Coevolution

By situating (trans)formations of self produced through microsociological interactions within the context of ongoing macrohistorical processes, my work is something of an amalgamation of C. Wright Mills' investigations into the intersections between biography and history and Goffman's explorations into how rituals of social interaction maintain and disrupt the social order. I take these interplays between biography and history, social interaction and the social order, a step further, however, with the concept of *coevolution*. Although not mentioned as directly as (trans)formation throughout the following chapters, the concept of coevolution is an underlying theory driving many of the arguments made herein. While Goffman's work unveiled the ways in which seemingly innocuous, everyday, sometimes even mundane, social interactions actually functioned to either uphold, or disrupt, the social order, and Mills' work sought to draw direct relationships between biography and history in order to expose the ways in which personal problems were related to, or derivative of, social problems, I wish to push these lines of investigation further by exploring how interpersonal, everyday, microsociological interactions are not only constrained and enabled by macrosociological phenomena, but can also function to constrain and enable these same macrosociological forces.

In biological terms, coevolution “describes cases where two (or more) species *reciprocally* affect each other's evolution (my emphasis italicized)” (Berkeley 2017: 1). As much sociological work uses a top down approach in its attempts to unveil the ways in which the macro affects the micro, or conversely engages a grassroots

approach by exploring the ways in which the micro affects the macro, I wish to draw attention to a *reciprocal* effect between microsociological and macrosociological phenomena that simultaneously shape and are shaped by each other in a coevolutionary fashion. In particular, the following chapters explore the ways in which the bands and scenes that form the foci of this dissertation coevolved with the very political and economic practices they effectively resisted, and how they both shaped and were shaped by the broader political, sociological, ideological, and economic currents of their times. In this sense, the concept of coevolution is rooted within a line of social psychological scholarship that explores the way “social...structures endure because they are interactionally reproduced” (Cahill and Sandstrom 2011: 281). From this perspective, individuals and social structures are not separate entities that merely act upon each other. Rather, individuals actively resist and reproduce social structures, cultural mores, and social practices through everyday social interactions that occur both within and outside of institutionalized contexts (Arluke 1994; Blumer 1969; Chambliss 2006; Charon 2010; Duràn 2009; Goffman 1963; Goffman 1967; Wilkins 2008). The coevolutionary approach builds upon this body of social psychological literature by emphasizing the reciprocal nature of this interactionally orchestrated relationship between individuals and social structures.

(Trans)Formation of the Self and Coevolution as Social Psychological

Interventions into Cultural Studies

Taken together, the concepts of (trans)formation of the self and coevolution offer a sociohistorically informed social psychological intervention into scholarly discussions within the field of cultural studies concerning the role that popular culture plays in identity formation. By focusing on individuals' recounts of the role that music played in their (trans)formations of self, and by demonstrating how these (trans)formations coevolved with the broader sociohistorical conditions of desegregation era Los Angeles, this dissertation takes a "both/and" approach to an ongoing debate within cultural studies over the efficacy of the state and the culture industries in constraining subject possibilities through the production, distribution and consumption of popular music.

This conversation began with Adorno and Horkheimer's Marxist musings on the role that popular music plays in the formation of "subjects" that reproduce capitalist domination through the industrial production and consumption of standardized cultural products distributed by what they termed the "culture industry" (Adorno 1941; Adorno and Horkheimer 1944). Many others have since disputed their work as being far too reductive, arguing that consumers of music are not merely passive subjects, and that the efficacy that Adorno and Horkheimer granted the music industry over its cultural products was overdetermined (Benjamin 1936; Becker 1982; Hall 1980; Hedbidge 1979; Negus 1992; Negus 1996; Negus 1999; Reisman 1990). The concept of coevolution is positioned within this discussion most directly in

relation to the work *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures*, wherein Negus (1999) argues that the recording industry does indeed produce culture, yet it is also produced within a cultural milieu about which it is neither aware nor in control. Hence, not only does the recording industry produce culture, but culture also produces the recording industry. The coevolutionary approach of this work differs from Negus' work, however, as it situates the recording industry, and other institutions and social structures that were operative during desegregation era Los Angeles, in a reciprocal relationship with the cultures they produced, while Negus' paradigm situates the cultural milieu within which the recording industry is produced as potentially separate from, and not necessarily reciprocally related to, those cultures it produces.

Through employing a social psychological approach and methodological framework, this project offers insight into exactly how theoretical musings within cultural studies concerning the interplay between social structures, popular culture and identity formation are challenged and affirmed through the day-to-day experiences of musicians who came of age during desegregation era Los Angeles. Specifically, this social psychological intervention places emphasis on the role that interpersonal social interactions play in the (trans)formation of selves and cultural forms that come to engage coevolutionary relationships with social structures and ongoing historical phenomena. Hence, rather than locating the tension in cultural studies discussions of identity formation simply between discursively interpellated "subjects" and social structures, this work conveys how consent and resistance are formed not only through individuals' engagements with power, but also through

interpersonal social interactions with one another – interactions through which individuals continuously define and redefine themselves and the social world. It is through these social interactions, then, that individuals engage a sort of politics of reality as we vie over what is perceived to be real. Hence, without downplaying the significance of historically produced conditions, nor the existence of hierarchies of power and privilege that grant some people more power than others to define various aspects of reality, this dissertation posits that definitions of the social world, including one's own sense of self, are produced through a multitude of intersubjectivities that have been sociohistorically constructed through social interactions.

As intercultural music scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles provided youths from a multitude of cultural backgrounds the opportunity to engage new forms of social interactions, they became spaces wherein youths used music to subvert the racial order of Los Angeles – to redefine social reality – as they unsettled essentialist notions of racialized musical expressions. Toward this end, they engaged musical practices that uncoupled racialized bodies with racialized modes of expression, and/or appropriated these couplings in unique and (trans)formative ways. These creative uses of popular culture engaged through social interaction offer a social psychological engagement with a broad discussion within popular music studies concerning essentialist notions of musical practice. In terms of race and music, this debate has largely centered on arguments that assign racialized modes of musical expression to respective racialized bodies (Baraka 1963; Keil 1966; Vincent 1996; West 1999; Radano 2003; Gilroy 1993; Negus 1996). In so doing, these theories either ascribe a

racialized essence to various popular music practices, or they trouble such ascriptions. My research intervenes in this discussion by demonstrating how, at times, my interviewees ran with the assumptions of these racialized ascriptions, while at others, they critically engaged their restrictive premises. However, whether my interviewees accepted or resisted essentialist prescriptions such as black, white and Latin music, these racialized and nationalized markers of musical formulation gave them the means to engage a politics of interculturality that pushed back against the oppressive and reductive forces of racialization. Hence, rather than challenging or affirming various positions in the essentialism debate, the social psychological approach of this research demonstrates how my interviewees made use of the perceived naturalness of essentialist notions of racialized genres and musical practices as a means to politicize the process of music making with a (trans)formative intercultural intervention in a racially segregated city. In so doing, these youths transformed essentialist notions from sites of social control into emancipatory intercultural expressions that pushed back against the historical currents of racial separatism that had naturalized racial differences within the city.

In this sense, this work builds upon Lipsitz' (1994) formulations of strategic anti-essentialism. Based upon Spivak's theory of strategic *essentialism*, strategic *anti-essentialism* refers to the way in which individuals purposefully make use of cultural forms associated with cultural groups other than their own in order to: (a) express a shared cultural experience with the group from which the form is borrowed, (b) to push the boundaries of acceptable modes of expression for a given group, or (c)

to “become ‘more themselves’ by appearing to be something else” (Lipsitz 1994:63). While this dissertation does demonstrate how youths who were inducted into the desegregation effort of the LAUSD made use of musical forms that pushed the boundaries of racialized modes of expression toward each of the three ends outlined by strategic anti-essentialism, they often did so in a manner that was more intuitive and effortless than the concept of a “strategy” implies. Hence, while at times some of my interviewees engaged strategic anti-essentialism through their musical practices, others simply reached for familiarity in difference, and composed intercultural grooves and riffs borrowed from the variety of styles they encountered daily on the schoolyard and within the city in order to find their instrument’s place in songs and song forms that were unfamiliar, and, at times, even unprecedented.

When Wil Dog Abers, the white Jewish bassist for Ozomatli, heard a cumbia for the first time, for example, he heard something completely foreign, and reached for something familiar to find his place in the song. As Ulises Bella, saxophonist for Ozomatli, recalls:

I knew what a Cumbia was but I remember, “Let’s play this Cumbia rhythm,” and Wil-Dog going like, “Well, what the fuck is that?” And he’s like, “Oh, it sounds like reggae to me. I’m just going to play this reggae bass line against it.” And of course, it fits perfect. It fits really well. Reggae and cumbia fits really fuckin’ well...Emphasis on the upbeats...(Bella 2014).

With a shared emphasis on the upbeat between cumbia and reggae, we see Ozomatli make use of what Lipsitz refers to as a “family of resemblance”— a shared stylistic element in two culturally distinct musical forms (1990). However, as Wil-Dog

reaches for familiarity, he falls back upon a reggae bass line – a cultural form that is just as far removed as cumbia from any musical form essentialized as Jewish American. Rather than mobilizing a racialized musical form with an essentialist ascription to white and/or Jewish identity, or purposefully engaging a musical form that had been constructed as essentially “other” to white Jewish identity – as strategic anti-essentialism posits – Wil Dog makes use of an Afro-Caribbean form with the sort of intuitive familiarity that comes with having grown up with the music in an intercultural context. Hence, examples such as this do not easily fit into scholars’ framing of strategic-essentialism as the political enactment and/or disturbance of essentialist musical forms via the intentional deployment of one’s own assumed culture, nor strategic anti-essentialism’s framing as the intentional cooptation of one group’s expressive culture by another toward the same end. This type of encounter is instead indicative of a messiness of cultural identity that emerged as youths’ senses of self were (trans)formed within the context of desegregation – a messiness that allowed Wil Dog to feel an intuitive familiarity within cultural difference itself as he used the familiar difference of reggae to find his way through the unfamiliar difference of cumbia.

It is through exploring this very messiness of intercultural identity that emerged during desegregation era Los Angeles that this work offers a social psychological intervention into studies of music and interculturality. Specifically, this dissertation exposes how intercultural musical practices during the desegregation era may be understood through Childs’ (2003) theory of intercultural alliance

formation, which he refers to as Transcommunality. Central to Transcommunality is the idea that individuals often gain a sense of self and community in relation to collective cultural groups that society defines through markers of identity such as race, class, gender, political affiliation, etc. Childs discusses these collective autonomy-oriented cultural groups in terms of “rooted emplacements of affiliation.” The social psychological approach of this dissertation interrogates how individuals are socialized (or resist becoming socialized) into such emplacements through the process of the (trans)formation of the self. Specifically, this work explores how selves that were (trans)formed within the context of desegregation not only engaged intercultural, or transcommunal, practices of music making with those rooted in a multitude of emplacements of affiliation, but also (trans)formed and erected new emplacements through musical practices and everyday social interactions that were marked by interculturality. In so doing, these youths expanded upon existing notions of cultural belonging through the formation of communities that took interculturality as a starting point, rather than a goal to achieve. This locates interculturality as an emplacement of affiliation in its own right wherein familiarity with cultural difference was the very factor that cohered the bands and scenes explored herein. That is, these intercultural emplacements of affiliation emerged through an intercultural messiness wherein cultural difference became intuitively, rather than strategically, familiar, and cultural difference itself served as the constant for community building. *Difference was the similarity.*

In this sense, this dissertation pushes against a structuralist thread of cultural

studies scholarship, which makes use of the concept of positionality to situate a set of subject possibilities as essentially fixed. Massumi (2002) uses the metaphor of *the grid* to wage this critique. Cultural studies, Massumi argues, has made use of the concept of positionality, which imagines cultural subjects to exist on a grid constructed through discursive practices and ideologies into a predetermined set of subject possibilities based on categories such as race, class, gender and sexual orientation. Subjects occupy a point on the cultural grid based on the overlapping location occupied by one term from each of these categories of identity markers (for example, a white, working class, cisgender female). True, subjects are not singular, nor are they fixed, as they can jump from one point to another on the grid through processes of decoding dominant ideologies in oppositional ways, but the set of subject possibilities *is* fixed through the discursive practices of signification that frame them. Massumi notes, “the entire gamut of cultural emplacements, including the ‘subversive’ ones, are pre-coded into the ideological master structure” (2002: 3). In addition, movement is removed from the equation. Subjects can move from one point to another on the grid, but the only defining points of the subject’s identity occur at the beginning and end of the move, not within the movement itself.

The social psychological approach of this dissertation explores intercultural (trans)formations of the self that emerged as youths used music to establish new forms of community and cultural belonging within the context of desegregation era Los Angeles. As such, interculturality served as an emplacement of affiliation that was less “rooted” than those Child’s describes, and was rather established through the

very *movements* that the concept of positionality discounts. Specifically, the movements explored in this dissertation were enacted through musical expressions that pushed toward and away from predetermined subject possibilities as well as unprecedented forms of collective identity. As such, these movements undoubtedly riffed upon existing subject possibilities that had historically been composed onto the grid through discursive practices that employed racialized musical signifiers, but they also fostered the development of selves that defied locations on the grid through musical movements that (trans)formed the ideological and institutional “master” structure put forth by segregation, the Los Angeles racial order, and the seemingly irrepressible force of racialization. In so doing, musicians during desegregation era Los Angeles exposed and exploited the inherent malleability in the social construction of race as they fostered (trans)formations of self that allowed for the emergence of unprecedented forms of community, cultural identity, and notions of belonging.

Contributions to Popular Music Studies from Los Angeles

This dissertation explores an era of Los Angeles’ history that I term the desegregation era – a period spanning from 1970 - 2000. This era began in 1970 when the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled that the LAUSD would be required by law to integrate the schools within its district, and continues through the implementation of the desegregation effort of the LAUSD from 1978 throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Although the LAUSD continues to maintain a Student Integration

Services department today, integration efforts were severely hindered in the early 1980s due to statewide policy changes, so I mark the end of this era in 2000, when the last of the youths inducted into the earliest phase of the effort came of age, graduated high school, and began to take their unique (trans)formations of self, and their music, beyond the confines of the desegregated schoolyards.

The periodization of this dissertation situates it in relation to several scholarly works that explore intercultural popular musical forms from Los Angeles. Beginning in 1970, this work picks up almost exactly where Macías' (2008) *Mexican American Mojo* leaves off in its exploration of popular cultural forms that provided sites of intercultural encounter and exchange in postwar Los Angeles. Macías' work places a particular emphasis on Chicano identity as he renders visible the many contributions that Mexican Americans made to a variety of musical and cultural traditions within the city during the postwar era. This dissertation also overlaps historically with portions of Johnson's (2013) work, *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity*, which situates popular music as a site to explore interracial, anti-racist alliances forged among African Americans and Latinos in Los Angeles from 1940 through the present. Leaving off in 2000, this dissertation directly precedes the portions of Petersen's (2010) work, *Sound, Space and the City*, which interrogate the political, economic, and sociological implications of daKAH's early 2000 "civic performances in Downtown Los Angeles" that were staged as part of a series of free summertime public concerts at Grand Performances in the Bunker Hill area of downtown.

While this dissertation aligns historically with the aforementioned works, and

often explores similar terrain in terms of content and context, my work departs from Macias, Johnson, Petersen, and other scholarly works in several ways. First, this work does not place a specific emphasis on popular music as a site to explore the coalitions, conflicts, and community building engaged by marginalized groups who share more or less horizontal relationships to power and privilege. While Macias and Johnson center their studies on African American and Latino intercultural exchange, this dissertation focuses on several bands and scenes that were also comprised of musicians and fans with racial (and class) privilege. As such, this work offers an analysis of how the existence of vertical relationships among participants within these scenes was, at times, productive, while at others, highly invasive and prohibitive to the project racial democratization. Nevertheless, the context of desegregation provided for the emergence of scenes that were, for better or for worse, integrated with participants who held both horizontal and vertical relationships to power and privilege. This work specifically explores the racial and class dimensions of these interrelational dynamics, both on the schoolyards and within music scenes that were largely formed through the interpersonal networks that were forged in the desegregated schools.

Additionally, this dissertation is the only scholarly research to date that employs a *social psychological approach* to place Los Angeles multiculturalism and intercultural music that emerged during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s within the specific institutionalized context of desegregation. It is also unique for pushing interviewees' experiences against the often contradictory aspirations and outcomes of

the newly emergent celebration of multiculturalism that drove the desegregation effort – an effort that, on the one hand, sought to redress centuries of institutionalized racism, and on the other, often reinforced the very mechanisms through which white supremacy had historically been propagated. As products of desegregated schools, young musicians forged unique forms of interculturality that took multiculturalism as a given and fostered *intuitive* approaches to navigating and composing cultural difference.

Other works *have* placed musics that challenged racial essentialism within the historical and interpersonal context of desegregation – namely Mahon’s (2000; 2004) ethnographic work exploring the music and scenes that emerged via the establishment of the Black Rock Coalition (BRC) in New York and Los Angeles during the 1980s. While this dissertation explores similar, often overlapping, terrain, specifically concerning modes of racialization that ignore (often class-based) intraracial cultural difference and police the boundaries of blackness and acceptable modes of black expression with a particularly oppressive scrutiny, my work departs from Mahon’s in several ways.

Mahon’s work focuses on the BRC, an organization composed mostly of members who were born between 1954 and 1964 and were “predominantly African American veterans of public school integration efforts of the late 1960s and 1970s” (2000: 284). This places Mahon’s work within a very specific racial and temporal dimension of school desegregation. For Los Angeles, this meant that Mahon, like the aforementioned Fishbone documentary, was studying a far less rigorously

institutionalized era of school desegregation defined mostly by a Permits with Transportation (PWT) program that bussed a relatively small number of students of color to predominantly white schools. This is reflected in Mahon's research, wherein many interviewees speak of being tokenized, racial outsiders who gained a certain amount of mainstream cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) and cultural fluency with musical forms associated (and essentialized) with whiteness.

While my interviewees were born between the mid 1960s and mid 1970s, the majority of them attended desegregated schools in the 80s and 90s – years marked by the institutionalization of a comprehensive desegregation plan that included magnet programs, paired and clustered schools, mid site campuses and the PWT program. Although this later phase of the desegregation of the LAUSD had its fair share of problems (explored in depth in chapter 1), the breadth of its programming, combined with a newly defined emphasis upon eliminating the harms associated with “racial isolation” (US Commission on Civil Rights 1977), meant that a more complex network of racially diverse schoolyards was established during this era. While the effort was still largely driven by the assimilative rhetoric of exposing students of color to white culture in order for them to gain cultural capital, this phase nevertheless produced intercultural encounters and (trans)formations of self that were not solely defined by a handful of students of color attending predominantly white schools. In fact, this phase of the effort placed such a heavy emphasis on cajoling (and in some cases mandating) white students to be bussed outside of their neighborhoods in order to desegregate “Racially Isolated Minority Schools (RIMS)”

(to use the court's terms) that white privilege slipped back into the framework of desegregation through a song and dance to the tune of "How can we get more white kids to enroll in RIMS schools?"

Nevertheless, in this later, more institutionalized, and less monolithic, stage of desegregation, white students sometimes found themselves in schools where they were in the numeric minority, and the pecking order established on such schoolyards did not necessarily privilege whiteness. As a result, some of my interviewees' recounts flip the script on dominant narratives of desegregation by detailing contexts wherein whiteness was not necessarily an asset, and cultural capital was accrued through assimilating to cultural forms not associated with the otherwise dominant culture (i.e. hip hop, funk, reggae, ska) – a context rarely, if ever, considered in scholarly works on desegregation. Hence, the social psychological approach of this study renders visible (trans)formations of self within social milieus that, at times, subverted traditional dynamics of assimilation and racial and class privilege, and, in so doing, coordinated emancipatory expressive cultures into intercultural musical forms that would not have been possible in earlier phases of the desegregation effort.

Moreover, as this dissertation focuses on a more comprehensively institutionalized era of Los Angeles desegregation, the experiences of musicians who were inducted into this later phase of the effort began to play with, and push against, the more nuanced contradictions of a newly emergent celebration of multiculturalism, specifically as this celebratory rhetoric became increasingly framed by the courts, the school district, the media, interest groups and the court interveners involved in the

effort. Hence, the somewhat meticulous social psychological mapping of interpersonal networks from the schoolyard to the stage engaged by this dissertation situates intercultural music scenes of the 80s and 90s within the context of the desegregation of the LAUSD more thoroughly than any other scholarly work to date. In so doing, this work demonstrates how intercultural musicians and scenes during this era etched out a form of interculturality that (trans)formed and coevolved with the increasingly institutionalized contradictions of Los Angeles multiculturalism that both framed, and pushed against, post-civil rights efforts to achieve racial democratization.

Furthermore, while Mahon emphasizes her interviewees' understandings of having been inducted into a desegregation effort, most of my interviewees were not aware that the schools they attended were part of such an effort. They understood that these schools provided them with integrative experiences that would not have been possible in their "neighborhood" schools, but they did not usually associate these experiences with state-sanctioned desegregation. Having been born a decade or two after Mahon's interviewees, these youths did not witness the Civil Rights Movement first hand, and many were too young to remember the court proceedings ignited by *Crawford v. Los Angeles Board of Education*, which prompted the implementation of the first comprehensive phase of the LAUSD's desegregation effort in 1978. This generational remove from the conditions that began to unsettle institutionalized segregation in US society may account for my interviewees' general lack of conscious understanding of having been inducted into a post-civil rights

desegregation effort. This fact suggests, to some degree, that, within my interview pool, multiculturalism had been naturalized as a stable feature of social life, and its relative newness was, to some extent, taken for granted. For their entire lives, multiculturalism, as an institution and an ideology, had been consistently reinscribed into the US popular imagination in forms ranging from tales of the emancipatory struggles that defined the Civil Rights Movement to the disingenuousness of post-civil rights colorblindness that often appropriated civil rights icons and rhetoric to roll back gains made toward racial democratization. With all of these contradictory multicultural pronouncements dominating US social and civic life, a sort of nonchalance had replaced the radical space that multiculturalism had once owned via its stark defiance of segregationist ideologies and white supremacy.

Yet, as multiculturalism became less radical, it also became less fragile. Especially for my interviewees who had been inducted into the desegregation effort, it was a constant, and although it was loaded with connotations that ranged from destructive disingenuousness to benign cliché to emancipatory proclamation, it was not perceived as something that had to be mandated by the state into existence. Rather, *they* could own it, albeit in a multitude of contradictory ways; they could use it to try on new identities that at once affirmed intra-communal senses of cultural belonging *and* defied restrictive notions of essentialism and racial authenticity; and they could tailor it into musical forms that engaged and expressed the intuitive development of (trans)formations of self within a context of institutionalized desegregation about which they remained largely unaware. For many youths

inducted into this phase of the desegregation effort, interculturality was a given – a starting point, rather than a radical goal to achieve or resist.

In terms of scales of geography and intimacy, this dissertation’s emphasis upon intercultural music that emerged within the context of desegregation meant that the musicians interviewed for this project matched the interviewee criteria without qualifying as “big acts” – a methodological practice that represents another significant departure from the vast majority of research on popular music from Los Angeles, which tends to focus on bands that have gained notoriety on a national and/or global stage (Kelly 2002; Kun 2005; Kun 2014; Lipsitz 1990; Lipsitz 1997; Macias 2008; Petersen 2010). Although most of my interviewees were, and continue to be, quite well known within the city, they nevertheless played smaller “underground” venues during the desegregation era, and were often lesser known than those musicians explored in other scholarly works. True, some of the bands included herein went on to gain considerable fame – namely Ozomatli, Fishbone, and daKAH. However, this dissertation levels its gaze at the ways in which my interviewees, and the other musicians discussed in this research, were navigating local concerns with their music, and composing interculturality into the contours of a segregated Los Angeles within the context of small venues, obscure restaurants, dive bars, backyard parties, peer-run recording studios, and community centers that, often purposefully, operated on the fringes of (or completely removed from) industry involvement. These were not unionized musicians; most of them were not getting radio plays or signing record deals; and, during the desegregation era, the majority of

them were not performing in ballrooms or amphitheaters, or Grand Performances for that matter. Yet, while most of my interviewees have yet to receive notoriety outside of the city, their music, and the other career paths many among them have chosen, continue to etch out the contours of Los Angeles multiculturalism on a local stage with selves that have been (trans)formed, in part, within the localized context of desegregation. By focusing on smaller acts, integrated scenes, and bands whose resistance to racism and racialized genres placed them on the fringes of market interventions, this dissertation situates the emergence of contemporary Los Angeles multiculturalism within the more localized and intimate context of intercultural music that was rarely, if ever, heard outside of the city.

Undoubtedly, much existing scholarly literature on intercultural music from Los Angeles attempts to link the development of the city's unique form of multiculturalism and popular culture to national contexts and globalization—particularly concerning how Los Angeles popular culture articulates the interculturality produced through national and transnational flows of people, commerce, and culture (Lipsitz 1990; Lipsitz 1997; Kun 2005; Kun 2014; Petersen 2010). While this dissertation does, to some extent, engage this type of analysis, the primary objective of this project is to develop a more intimate social psychological engagement with Los Angeles multiculturalism offered through youths' recounts of growing into selves (trans)formed within the context of racial desegregation. In so doing, this dissertation levels its gaze on a more localized scale than most scholarly

works dealing in popular culture from Los Angeles – not just local in terms of municipal boundaries, but also local in the most intimate terms of the self.

This is not to say that this work divorces localized contexts from national and transnational flows. Indeed, the sociological approach of (trans)formation aims to contextualize more psychological approaches to the formation of the self by placing these formations within broader sociohistorical circumstances and processes. With this said, the primary gaze of this project is leveled at youths within the city and their use of music to navigate new forms of social interactions within schoolyards and intercultural music scenes. Few works investigate how, during the desegregation era, newly forged *intra-municipal* flows of people and music across segregated neighborhoods came to define the contemporary uniqueness of Los Angeles' multiculturalism just as powerfully as, and in conjunction with, transnationalism. This dissertation aims to address this gap in the literature by offering a social psychological investigation of these intra-municipal flows. The assertion here is that desegregation played an integral role in facilitating Los Angeles' shift from blatant, legally-sanctioned racism and segregation to the institutionalization of multiculturalism, thus casting multiculturalism as a defining feature of the city. Hence, while this dissertation levels its gaze at local experiences and intimacies, it investigates and speaks to one of the fundamental processes that came to define Los Angeles on the world stage as a multicultural global city – a defining feature marked by an incoherent spectrum ranging from disingenuous celebrations that mask racial hierarchies to emancipatory utopias of racial democratization.

As such, this dissertation situates intercultural music that emerged during desegregation era Los Angeles within a site of uncertainty, one akin to what Lipsitz (1994) has referred to as a *Dangerous Crossroads*. For Lipsitz, the crossroads is a site of convergence, a musical intersection where peril and promise come together and disperse. Much like the desegregation effort, the music that emerged during this era offered a potential, but no guarantees. It (trans)formed at a crossroads of peril and promise, oppression and emancipation, hope and despair. It illuminated the potential for Los Angeles' multiculturalism to culminate in a utopia – or what Kun (2005) has referred to as an *Audiotopia* – of interracial resolve, yet did so within an institutionalized context that often threatened to repackage its emancipatory potential within the framework of a disingenuous celebration of multiculturalism. The music thus performed revolutionary cultural work laden with emancipatory (trans)formations that unsettled historical practices of racial separatism, while simultaneously calling into question the potential for its own political resilience and survival.

Gender Bias and Political Limitations Within the Scenes and the Research

It is important to acknowledge the absence of female voices and perspectives in this research, and to take stock of the reason for, and the political implications of, this absence. First, mirroring a general trend found in previous eras of US popular music, the performers in the bands explored herein were predominantly male. With the exception of the hip hop orchestra, daKAH, which boasts a well-rounded lineup

of male and female musicians and front people, the bands included in this research were entirely male with very few exceptions. Hence, as I based this research on musicians' perspectives, and mapped the networks they formed with other performing musicians during the desegregation era, the research inevitably led me to a nearly all-male pool of interviewees.

The fact that the bands explored in this research were almost entirely male points to a practice of gender exclusion that illuminates a political limitation of the scenes discussed herein. This limitation was addressed most directly in an interview with Clinton Cameron in reference to his firing of Denise, a female drummer who played briefly for his project, Section 8. As he notes:

I thought she was an OK drummer, but I didn't think she really understood funk and how to like swing it. So, I mean, if she was a good funk drummer, she would have stayed in the band as far as I was concerned...but there was some animosity and anger on her part I'm sure, and I think...I'll have to admit. I did like the feeling of an all boy's club, and you know, I feel kind of ashamed about it now, you know, like, that that was a part of the feeling about it. 'Cuz I really do want to embrace a feminist side of my politics. I wanna...be all inclusive, but that did play a role in it. You know...I could talk about how black people have it difficult, but, you know, you look at how many all-female bands are out there or how many females can stay in a dynamic of all males situation, and it's like, it's difficult.... you know, let's face it...We continue to be cordial, but I kicked her out of the band (Cameron 2014).

While bands such as Section 8 – that served as cornerstones for the scenes explored in this research – pushed the boundaries of racialized modes of expression, and included a diverse blend of musicians from a variety of racial backgrounds and neighborhoods throughout the city, they nevertheless engaged a politics of gender exclusion that reified the history of male supremacy within US popular musical performance. In

this sense, some of the (trans)formative and emancipatory cultural work performed by these scenes realized a certain amount of racial democratization at the expense of perpetuating the subordination of women who were largely excluded from the “all boys club” on stage.

For now, my focus is on the possibilities and limitations of this emancipatory cultural work along the axes of race and class. In the future, I hope to delve deeper into the gender dimensions of this project. The work of scholars such as Vargas (2012), Rustin and Tucker (2008), and Habell-Pallàn (2005) would inform such an exploration, as each of these scholars have written against masculinist recovery stories that, on the one hand, make visible a forgotten thread of popular music history, and on the other, obscure the roles of women in these recoveries by exaggerating the relative contributions of men to the music, the scenes and the cultural identities they explore.

With this said, it is extremely important not to overstate the absence of women from performance roles in the scenes discussed herein. Indeed, while males did predominate the intercultural scenes as performers, and thus comprise nearly my entire interview pool, women such as Macy Gray and Queen Bee were mentioned during several interviews and were spoken of in high regard. Additionally, as mentioned previously, daKAH – a massive hip hop orchestra that reaches across racial, gender, class, generational and national lines, and is thus arguably the culmination of the multiculturalism discussed herein – has always, in its various manifestations, boasted an evenly balanced lineup of female and male musicians.

Furthermore, according to my interviewees, women played an integral role not just as performers, but in the makeup of the audiences and in the success of clubs as well. Additionally, women's musical tastes were at times used to determine the success of the bands. As Ulises Bella from Ozomatli notes:

You know what? When it comes down to it, I don't know who was it...I think it was Miles Davis said it, "If there's not ladies at your show dancing, you ain't doin' shit"...And I even remember in our first rehearsals...was just like, "well, what the fuck we gonna do?" Like Cut Chemist was on the floor with his turntables...at the Peace and Justice Center. I remember in this room, and we were like, "well what are we going to play?" And the only thing that was definitely in consensus was, "We wanna get people to dance." Like, "Yo, we gotta get people dancing, man. That's all that fuckin' matters." So then boom, what does that mean? "I know this cumbia rhythm" (Bella 2014).

Not only was the ability to get women dancing used as a barometer for a band's success, but this also became a factor that guided intercultural bands like Ozomatli as they chose which styles of music to blend into cultural amalgamations. Meshing well sonically was, of course, a requisite for piecing various cultural traditions together, but the resulting amalgamations also had to demonstrate the ability to get women on the dance floor. Hence, it could well be argued that women's approval of the intercultural grooves performed in these spaces played a decisive factor in precisely how bands chose to engage interculturality through music – a role that may in fact have shaped the music just as powerfully as the male musicians' cultural backgrounds, musical tastes, cultural repertoires and musical proficiency.

Conversely, some of this could be chalked up to the spectacle, and quite possibly the perceived sexual availability, of a dancing female. That is, this role of women could be viewed as less of an empowered position wherein their tastes were

used to determine the dynamics of cultural hybridity, musical outcomes and club success, and rather as a subordinate position that, through dancing, reduced their roles within these scenes to dancing objects that facilitated male homosocial bonding through a perceived sexual availability. A further iteration of this work, then, would include an emphasis on the roles of women within these scenes – both as audience members and performers – in order to place their experiences as central to the political potentials and limitations of intercultural music scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles. Such an iteration would also reduce the gender bias of this research that was inadvertently produced (and reproduced) through its sole reliance on the experiences of performing musicians to form the archive of memories upon which much of this research is based.

Mapping the Dissertation

Chapter one makes use of archival data collected by the monitoring committee appointed by Judge Paul Egly of the Los Angeles Superior Court to situate the project historically within the context of the desegregation of the LAUSD. This chapter also makes use of interview data to demonstrate how youths who attended desegregated schools negotiated new forms of intercultural social interactions on an everyday, interpersonal basis, and engaged unique (trans)formations of the self within the context of desegregation. I place particular emphasis on understanding the ways in which my interviewees' accounts both challenge and affirm the stated aspirations of a desegregation effort often stifled by its own efforts. This chapter also begins to map

the emergence of intercultural social networks that would form the basis for many of the intercultural bands and scenes explored in later chapters.

Chapter two builds upon the first chapter as it continues to map these intercultural social networks and makes use of interview data to demonstrate how youths used music to navigate these new forms of intercultural encounters. At times, this meant employing racialized genres to reaffirm intra-communal solidarity and/or subvert the coupling of such genres with racialized bodies, while at others, youths engaged a cross-cultural politics to push the boundaries of racialized musical forms and modes of expression, thus expanding upon existing notions of self, community and cultural belonging. In this sense, music became a site wherein categories of sameness and difference were both erected and obscured. Perhaps most importantly, this chapter explores how musicians who forged intercultural, interpersonal networks in the LAUSD's desegregated schools drew upon these networks as they made their way from the schoolyard to the stage, thus coalescing a diverse group of young people into musical scenes that took the political project of desegregation beyond the confines of the schoolyards. In so doing, they began the work of denaturalizing the institution and ideology of segregation through musical forms and intercultural engagements that provided a counter to racial hierarchies, white supremacy and the racial antagonisms that continued to divide the city along racial lines.

Chapter three makes use of interview data in order to unpack the ideological currents that were (trans)formed on the desegregated schoolyards and became operative within the intercultural music scenes. This chapter begins with a discussion

of how white neighborhoods that continued to be highly segregated nurtured ideological currents of colorblindness and cultural practices of white appropriation – practices which continued to propagate white supremacy throughout the desegregation era, even when musical forms and practices derived from these neighborhoods crossed over into intercultural scenes. The chapter then shifts to an exploration of how other musicians involved in intercultural bands and scenes during the desegregation era engaged ideological currents that proved more subversive, and how these currents allowed such intercultural engagements to denaturalize racial separatism on social psychological, and at times microeconomic, levels. By placing these youths’ racialized understandings of themselves and each other within the broader backdrop of the colorblind ideology that came to dominate the racial politics of the 80s and 90s, this chapter demonstrates how these youths engaged a *subversive colorblindness* that actively challenged the very structures of white supremacy that mainstream colorblindness sought to uphold. In so doing, they cultivated new and intuitive ways of engaging cultural difference with a seemingly creative effortlessness. The chapter raises questions, however, about the effectiveness of this subversive colorblindness in resisting the appropriative advances of a disingenuous celebration of multiculturalism engaged by city institutions that praised the desegregation era’s ethos of inclusivity yet did little to rectify the persistence of socioeconomic inequality that continued to divide the city along racial lines.

Chapter four makes use of interviews, archival data, and extant literature to demonstrate how the intercultural bands and scenes explored in this dissertation

engaged a coevolutionary relationship with the broader political and economic currents that came to define 1980s and 1990s Los Angeles. Toward this end, this chapter examines how, as these youths pushed against the social currents of segregation and white supremacy, they were also constrained by these phenomena. Neither the music nor the scenes could sustain themselves without capital, which placed them squarely within the rise of neoliberalism, the political economy of white supremacy, and the racism of the music industry. This chapter thus frames intercultural music as a window into the politics and economy of interculturality during the desegregation era in Los Angeles, and demonstrates how these intercultural (trans)formations framed both the emancipatory and exclusionary politics of race and racism in the present.

The conclusion juxtaposes Ozomatli Day (a holiday established by Mayor Villaraigosa in 2010) with the anniversary of the 1992 Uprising. As these two events fall in late April less than a week apart, this chapter makes use of their temporal proximity to underscore the contradictions of Los Angeles multiculturalism. Specifically, this chapter explores the dissonance produced by a week that, at once, commemorates a band that has come to elicit and embody a utopic vision for the unique homegrown multiculturalism of Los Angeles *and* remembers the horrific racial violence that ensued following the acquittal of the four police officers caught on tape brutally beating Rodney King. The chapter also contextualizes the city's appropriation of Ozomalti's music and its staging of Rodney King's speech during the riots as enactments of a disingenuous celebratory multiculturalism, which hails

the virtues of racial unity in order to mask the persistence of racial inequality. The chapter continues with an examination of how the contradictions of Los Angeles multiculturalism were transplanted to a global stage in 2007 when the State Department, under George W. Bush, named the members of Ozomalti cultural ambassadors and dispatched them on a government-sponsored tour of the Middle East. In so doing, the chapter places contemporary US racial politics on a fulcrum teetering between hope and despair, as it demonstrates how the localized (trans)formations of self and intercultural musics that emerged during the desegregation era went on to compose the emancipatory and oppressive contradictions of Los Angeles multiculturalism onto a more contemporary and global stage.

At the heart of this dissertation, there is a sadness, yet within this sadness, there is a hope. The potential for the US's unique cultural diversity to blossom into a form of interculturality capable of resisting oppression has all too often been stifled by powerful interests whose very claims to power rely upon cultivating divisiveness within diversity. "Like the forest buried beneath the highway /Never had a chance to grow" (Scott-Heron 1974). Yet, the intercultural music and youth movements that emerged in desegregation era Los Angeles offered a rare gift, a potential for interculturality to make use of diversity to perform cultural work in the opposite direction – to disrupt the institution and ideology of racial segregation, the very mechanism through which white supremacy has historically maintained the racial hierarchy within US society. As these youths made use of intercultural grooves in

intercultural spaces, they challenged the rigidity of racial designations and the policing of racialized expressions. In so doing, they “edge(d) beyond the limits of certainty, predictability, and orthodoxy” (Fischlin and Heble 2004:1) – limits that all too often seem to command (trans)formations of the self with an intractable force of racialization driven by the historical fallout from the racial terror upon which the US was built. By exposing and exploiting this inherent malleability in the social construction of race, the intercultural spaces explored in the pages that follow, and the people and music that emanate from within them, offer the potential for a ray of warmth to usher in the dawning of spring, thus disrupting the seemingly terminal “Winter in America” (Scott-Heron 1974). The snowpack is just water. *All that is solid melts into sound.....*

Chapter I

So Long Jim Crow: Desegregation of the Los Angeles Unified School District and the (Trans)Formation of the Self

In 1970, Judge Alfred Gitelson of the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled that the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) operated segregated schools and would be required by state law to take steps to integrate them (Bankston and Caldas 2007). According to Sharon L. Curry, the LAUSD's Assistant Superintendent, "The Court also ruled that desegregation is not strictly defined in terms of racial/ethnic percentages, but rather by the harms of racial isolation" (Curry 2007). In 1977, the US Commission on Civil Rights released a report stating that racial isolation was particularly harmful to "minorities" and was the chief cause of unequal education. The harms of racial isolation were identified by The Los Angeles Superior Court as "low academic achievement, low self-esteem, lack of access to post-secondary education, interracial hostility and intolerance, and overcrowded conditions" (Student Integration Services 2016). In response to this federal and local pressure, the LAUSD school board initiated a desegregation effort beginning in 1978, which attempted to curb racial isolation by bussing kids from neighborhoods throughout the city to attend the same schools.

This type of institutional effort to end "racial isolation" facilitated the emergence of a "celebration of multiculturalism," or what is now often referred to as "diversity," which separated the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, at least in rhetoric, from

earlier eras in Los Angeles – eras that had been marked by blatant, outright, and legally sanctioned segregation. Also playing a key role in the rise of this celebratory multiculturalism was the local activism – intimately tied to civil rights triumphs at the national level such as the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown vs. Board of Education* and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (aka The Fair Housing Act) – that prompted (or rather compelled) the LAUSD to initiate its desegregation effort. In 1961, Mary Ellen Crawford, an African American teen, attempted to enroll in the high school closest to her home, the virtually all-white South Gate High School. She was refused enrollment on the basis that she lived outside of the school’s enrollment boundaries and was instead rerouted to her virtually all-black “neighborhood” school, Jordan High School, which was farther from her home (Clayton 2008). As HoSang notes, “the attendance areas for South Gate High and nearby Jordan High School in Watts were regularly adjusted as Black families in Watts moved closer to the South Gate border. South Gate High remained nearly 100 percent white and was kept in far better condition, while Jordan High was almost entirely Black and badly in need of repair” (2010: 94).

Mary Ellen Crawford was not acting entirely on her own accord. In fact, with the intention of finding a family to initiate a lawsuit, Crawford was hand selected by Elnora Crowder of the NAACP to attempt enrolling at South Gate High because the high school was notorious for discriminatory enrollment practices. As McGraw notes, “she went house to house, like ‘an Avon lady,’ ringing doorbells” (Clayton 2008: 6). The case, *Crawford v. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles*, eventually went

to trial in the Los Angeles Superior Court in 1968 as a class action lawsuit including every school within the LAUSD. It would take twenty-one years (from the ACLU's 1963 initial filing of the lawsuit to the 1982 US Supreme Court ruling) and several interventions by the California Supreme Court and the United States Supreme Court for the case to be resolved, and when the dust settled, the final decision against mandatory reassignment would prove a huge blow to the desegregation effort. Nevertheless, *Crawford v. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles* would expose the LAUSD as “the most segregated school district in the entire country” (a label given to the LAUSD by the federal government in 1971), and would place the persistence of racial inequalities front and center in the public discourse within post-civil rights Los Angeles (Kafka 2011; US Commission on Civil Rights 1977: 8).

In 1965, four years after Mary Ellen Crawford's parents signed the complaint that would initiate the lawsuit, and three years before the case would go to trial, the Watts Riots erupted. This is no coincidence, as the two events were a response to the same currents of systemic racism carried out by the local government for decades prior. Although scholars have cited many reasons for the Watts riots, residential segregation, which inevitably results in segregated schools, was at the core of the rage that led to the unrest in Watts in August of 1965. As HoSang notes, “The immense population density resulting from seven decades of persistent housing segregation – and the segregated schools, workplaces, and social settings it produced and naturalized – fueled the fires of Watts” (2010: 87). Furthermore, Loren Miller has argued elsewhere “that the curfew area put into effect after the uprising began almost

exactly traced the boundaries of residential exclusions imposed on the city's Black communities" (HoSang 2010: 87). *Crawford v. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles*, as well as Judge Gitelson's ruling in 1970, then, were not only attempts to remedy the "harms of racial isolation" within the LAUSD, but also aimed to address the tensions that had erupted in Watts in the summer of 1965.

The desegregation of the LAUSD was finally implemented in a semi-comprehensive form in the fall of 1978, and, for many, the city seemed to be taking steps toward combatting the racial injustices that had marked its social landscape since its inception. As the 1980s wore on, however, it became unclear if much was actually changing. Schools were still horribly underfunded in communities of color, the socioeconomic gap persisted along racial lines, police brutality and corruption continued to target communities of color, white residents (including some LAUSD board members) and predominantly white anti-integration groups fought vehemently against any attempt made by the court to initiate a comprehensive desegregation plan, and throughout the city, racial tensions soared (Avila 2004; Beyette 1980; California Court of Appeal 1988; Ginott 1978; HoSang 2010; Reinhold 1991; Schwada 1979; Trombley 1980a;). In fact, during the period from 1980-1989, according to a report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, hate crimes in Los Angeles increased by 400% (Hatcher 1990).

Regardless of whether one considers the desegregation effort of the LAUSD a failure, the notion that the desegregation of the school district would decrease "interracial hostility and intolerance" within the city began to seem more like a utopic

vision touted by the United States Commission on Civil Rights than a lived reality for the residents of Los Angeles. Then, in April of 1992, twenty-two years after the initial ruling that mandated that the LAUSD take steps to integrate the schools within its district, the utopic vision of racial harmony was confronted with the stark reality of racial violence when the four officers accused of nearly beating Rodney King to death were declared not guilty by a virtually all-white jury in a courthouse in the white suburb of Simi Valley. The Los Angeles Uprising that ensued and its aftermath were a response to decades of pent up rage resulting from the same racial discrimination, brutality and oppression that had become the catalyst for the Watts riots twenty-seven years prior –injustices that had continued to define the Los Angeles social and political landscape despite the efforts made by institutions such as the LAUSD to curb “racial isolation, interracial hostility and intolerance.”

Once again, Los Angeles had become a hot bed for racial tension. The divisions between racial groups became more and more pronounced, and racial riots erupted at several integrated schools in the LAUSD. In 1992, for example, 900 students at Alexander Hamilton High School engaged in racially motivated violence, and the school was put on lock down for three hours. Students were forced to remain in classrooms as officers from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) roamed the halls in riot gear (Timnick and Williams 1992; Willett 1992). A day earlier, a similar riot had erupted at North Hollywood High School as well (Bernstein and Meyer 1992). Such instances exposed the limits of the city’s attempts to bridge cultures by ending racial isolation, and the celebration of multiculturalism had begun

to seem little more than liberal lip service during an era otherwise marked by the persistence of racial violence and inequalities.

The period covered by this dissertation, then, is defined, historically, by uprisings within Los Angeles – politically and racially motivated rage expressed by segments of several communities of color within Los Angeles as a response to their pleas for equality and justice falling on deaf ears within the city and its institutions. These uprisings beg the questions: What, if anything, had changed for the plight of people of color in Los Angeles following the Watts Riots and during the post-civil rights and desegregation era? And what good, if any at all, had been accomplished through the massive desegregation effort initiated by the LAUSD? What lessons, if any, can we take from the failures and success of this era as we continue the work toward racial equality and social justice? And finally, should we continue to hold “diversity” as a prefiguration of racial equality, or should we begin to rethink some of the assumptions that couple the former with the latter?

To answer these questions, I employ both macro- and microsociological approaches and methodologies. By and large, the literature on the desegregation effort of the LAUSD is dominated by a macrosociological approach (Clayton 2008; Cobb 2014; Kafka 2011; United States Commission on Civil Rights 1977), and, undoubtedly, asking the macro question of “Was the desegregation effort successful?” can only be answered with a definitive “No!” However, if we think critically about the framing of this question, particularly about what constitutes “success,” we open ourselves up to a much more nuanced analysis of the

desegregation effort, one which simultaneously acknowledges both the triumphs and failures of the effort. Undoubtedly, the LAUSD remains highly segregated to this day, and because schools in community of color remain largely underfunded, the mission of the desegregation effort – to provide equal access to quality education for students of all races – was never realized. In this sense, the effort failed. With this said, the problem with solely taking a macrosociological approach to analyzing the failures and successes of the desegregation effort of the LAUSD is that such an approach fails to account for the actual experiences of the students who attended integrated schools. To imply that the desegregation effort was a complete failure is to ignore the new possibilities and identities that emerged within this sociohistorical context. This is where employing microsociological analysis becomes useful.

There are two dominant narratives that have come to define the discourse surrounding desegregation and post-civil rights US. At one end, there is a utopian pronouncement of a colorblind, post-racial America, a dangerous narrative that masks the stark reality of social inequalities that continue to pervade every aspect of public and private life within the US. At the other end, there is a denouncement of desegregation as a complete failure, a position which makes its case based upon the persistence of the very social inequalities that its opposition attempts to mask. My research is situated near the center of this continuum as it introduces interview data that demonstrates how youths who were inducted into the desegregation effort made sense of people and situations foreign to their neighborhood environments. By taking seriously the accounts of those who were inducted into the desegregation effort of the

LAUSD, (without ignoring the macro failures of the desegregation effort to end systemic racism within the institution), I am shifting the discussion from a macrosociological pronouncement of complete failure to a more nuanced investigation into how these young people, suddenly thrust into integrated environments, found themselves negotiating new types of intercultural encounters. In so doing, they performed the difficult, yet necessary, work of confronting racial antagonisms on an everyday and interpersonal basis. In some cases, as those cited above, such encounters led to the unfortunate outcome of racial violence. In other instances, however, these encounters were transformative as they allowed these youths to explore new identities, new cultures, new forms of community, and new senses of cultural belonging. Social psychologically speaking, the desegregation era, and, as this dissertation argues, the musical practices that emerged during this era, gave youths a platform to negotiate racial difference within the city, and thus afforded them the opportunity to engage new (trans)formations of the self.

This chapter makes use of interview data to assess how youths inducted into the desegregation effort navigated new forms of intercultural social interactions, and how these interactions affected their (trans)formations of the self. In so doing, I aim to assess how, if at all, the desegregation era helped expand upon individuals' notions of cultural belonging, and if these new forms of community were effective in combatting racial antagonisms within the city and/or unsettling, in any way, the legacy of white supremacy and segregation upon which the Los Angeles racial order had been established. I ask these questions in an attempt to reopen a book that seems

to have already been shut through the condemnation of the desegregation of the LAUSD as a complete failure. Having attended schools that were either formed through or incorporated into the desegregation effort of the LAUSD for nearly my entire grade school experience, it always seemed to me that something was lost in this pronouncement of complete failure, and I was convinced that what was lost could be found in the accounts of the students who attended the integrated schools.

I move now to a brief history of segregation in Los Angeles followed by an exploration of how the accounts of my interviewees both challenge and affirm pronouncements of the successes and failures of the desegregation effort. In some instances, the ideals of the effort were realized as youths from varying cultural backgrounds shared the same schoolyards, and began challenging racialized assumptions through daily experiences marked by interracial social interactions. While in others, desegregated schoolyards became sites of resegregation as students formed racialized cliques and became further alienated from engaging interculturality. In this sense, the schoolyards themselves functioned as sites that both unsettled *and* reproduced the institution and ideology of racial segregation. Additionally, some of my interviewees' recounts challenged the very definitions and assumptions the courts used to guide the desegregation effort, and thus critically engaged the very premises upon which the effort was based. Yet, through the messiness of this often stormy, sometimes hopeful, experiment with racial integration, musical fluency would afford my interviewees a powerful means to navigate new encounters with cultural difference, build upon existing notions of community, and forge new senses of

cultural belonging. Hence, the narrative accounts of musicians who were inducted into the LAUSD's desegregation effort, and the (trans)formations of self they recount, offer us particularly useful perspectives to explore the triumphs and failures of the effort, as well as insight into the ways in which music became a tool used to actively construct the new possibilities, and communities, that emerged in the desegregation era.

Jim Crow in the Deep South(land)

In 1980, two years after the LAUSD launched the first phase of its comprehensive desegregation effort, my parents enrolled me in a desegregated magnet school called The Community School. Located near Fairfax Avenue and Airdrome Street, this school was formed by community members who lived in the southern most point of the Wilshire District section of West Los Angeles. According to a 1980 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, "It was begun by parents from the Canfield Avenue and Crescent Heights Elementary Schools. They were unhappy that Canfield was virtually all white and Crescent Heights nearly all black, though the two schools were less than a mile apart" (McCurdy 1980a: II6). Such a clearly segregated neighborhood, where one could travel along Airdrome Street across Stearns Drive, and go from a black to a white neighborhood, or vice versa, speaks to the highly segregated environment of Los Angeles during this time. That Los Angeles still remains highly segregated to this day is not something to ignore (Logan and Stults 2011), and the segregation of both the present and the past unsettle the perception of

Los Angeles as some sort of melting pot. Not only does the imagery of the melting pot reinforce a racial hierarchy – where success is measured by how well groups assimilate to, or melt into, the dominant culture – but it also maintains the assumption that all groups will be allowed to assimilate. This assumption is easily rebuked, as the history of the Los Angeles racial order shows how African Americans and Latinos were discriminated against, to varying degrees, at different points in the city’s history. After years of legally enforced patterns of residential segregation preceding and during the postwar era (discussed further below), Watts and South Central emerged as the black ghetto, and East Los Angeles emerged as the barrio. All of these areas had previously been thriving multicultural communities (Avila 2004). Overtime, however, much higher levels of residential segregation and concentration would be found within Los Angeles’ black community, and “by 1960, only one-fifth of the Spanish-surname population was concentrated in three neighborhoods of East Los Angeles, while more than half of all blacks in the county lived in seven neighborhoods in South Los Angeles” (Felker-Cantor 2014: 146). More evidence exists that, throughout the city’s history, groups experienced differing levels of discrimination and were barred access to assimilation depending upon that group’s perceived threat to employment opportunities for whites (Avila 2004).

Although civil rights triumphs had repealed many of the legally sanctioned forms of residential segregation in the city, decades of institutional discrimination had produced racialized neighborhoods and subjects, and had naturalized racial segregation as an institution and an ideology well into the post-civil rights era. In

fact, by 1980, much of the city resembled the imagery conjured by the Jim Crow South – with freeways taking the place of railroad tracks. But no, this was not the Jim Crow South, the era and region in this country commonly used by other parts of the nation as scapegoats to deny the racist and discriminatory practices that have historically taken root and continued to blossom in their own backyards; no, this was post-civil rights Los Angeles, a “liberal” city in California.

One could, as many have, chalk all of this up to de facto rather than de jure segregation, but a review of the history of Los Angeles residential segregation does not support such claims. For example, racial zoning practices in Los Angeles were aggressively pursued by lawmakers in the 1940s, and when these were declared unconstitutional, white homeowners skirted the illegality of government enforcement by signing private contracts with each other (called covenants), which required that the homes in certain neighborhoods only be sold and resold to whites (Garrison 2008). Such covenants gave homeowners the right to sue other homeowners for selling a home in their neighborhood to anybody who was not white. The covenants also gave white homeowners legal grounds to sue any non-white homebuyer who successfully purchased a home in a neighborhood where the residents had enacted such covenants. It was not until the 1948 US Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Shelley vs. Kraemer* that the covenants were ruled unenforceable by the state (Garrison 2008). Finally, in 1963, when California legislature passed the Rumford Fair Housing act, which mandated that property owners who were renting out residences could not deny an applicant based upon the applicant’s race, it appeared

that steps were being taken toward ending discriminatory practices in the residential market.

No sooner than anti-discriminatory practices had been legislated, however, interest groups began mounting an attack in the state to repeal the laws. In 1964, the California Real Estate Association (CREA) crafted Proposition 14, which would hold a place on the ballots in the November 1964 elections. As HoSang notes, “the six-sentence constitutional amendment sought to exempt the real estate industry, apartment owners, and individual homeowners from nearly all antidiscrimination legislation, enshrining an unprecedented ‘right to discriminate’ in housing sales and rentals within the state’s highest law” (2010: 53). California voters approved proposition 14 by a two-to-one margin in the same year that the state voted civil rights proponent Lyndon B. Johnson and his “Great Society” into the White House – a contradictory move indicative of the ways in which white liberals often support social justice in the abstract, yet balk at efforts that would affect them directly on social and economic levels. The passage of Proposition 14 would prove to have detrimental effects upon race relations within the city, and, although the US Supreme Court would eventually overturn the proposition on grounds that it was unconstitutional, “many linked the [election] results to the Watts Uprising the following summer” (HoSang 2010: 54). It would take four more years, with the incorporation of the Rumford Fair Housing Act as Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, for the Federal Housing Association (FHA) to cease its practice of redlining and other forms of discriminatory loaning practices, which lead to ghettoization and

urban decay in the inner-city areas of Los Angeles, as well as the creation of all-white suburbs in Westchester, Southgate, and more recently, the San Fernando Valley (Avila 2004). Furthermore, there is evidence that, continuing through the 1990s, black and Latino homebuyers were more likely to have their mortgages approved when applying for homes in black and Latino neighborhoods (Reibel 2000). Such research debunks claims that neighborhood segregation in Los Angeles was merely the result of de facto trends among residents who simply preferred to stick with their “own kind,” and illuminates the ways in which whites continuously attempted to use legal means to divide the city along racial lines. As Edward L. Kussman, the Vice President of the NAACP Southern Area Conference noted in his 1979 Public Forums piece in the *Valley Times*:

Whites created the ghetto...the overriding causes of segregation and poverty of the racial ghetto (what white Americans have never understood but the Negro can never forget), is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions maintained it and white society condones it, and the government condoned and financed segregation as in the case of FHA and other arms of the government that protected and enforced the wishes of the bigots through restrictive covenants (sic), and verbal restrictive agreements supported the white finance power structure's every wish to deprive blacks of equal access to the home of his choice (no pg #).

This was the legacy and racial order inherited by post-civil rights Los Angeles, and it was a reaction to this deepening racial divide upon which the desegregation of the LAUSD was premised.

Desegregation of the Los Angeles Unified School District

As previously mentioned, in 1970, as the first ruling in the ongoing *Crawford*

v. Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles lawsuit, Judge Alfred Gitelson of the Los Angeles Superior Court ruled that the LAUSD operated segregated schools within its district and would be required by the court to take steps to integrate them (Bankston and Caldas 2007). Interestingly, Judge Gitelson charged that the school board was guilty of *de jure*, not *de facto*, segregation because “he saw evidence that the creation of school boundaries and new construction decisions were clearly based on race. The plaintiffs...added that the board’s refusal to remedy segregation once they had been notified of its existence in 1962 was further proof of *de jure* segregation” (Clayton 2008: 10-11). I would add that the aforementioned acts of *de jure* discrimination committed by the FHA and white homeowners also account for why the city’s neighborhood schools were so segregated in 1970. In fact, come 1971, according to a survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the LAUSD operated “the most segregated schools in the entire country” (Kafka 2011; US Commission on Civil Rights 1977: 8). In effect, as the Superior Court had charged, the LAUSD was operating separate *and* unequal facilities.

Following Judge Gitelson’s ruling, the LAUSD school board filed an appeal to the California Supreme Court based upon its arguments during trial that “the segregation of the district’s schools was a result of housing preferences and therefore out of the board’s control” and that even if the board could alleviate segregation, “integration would not be beneficial to minorities” (a racist accusation premised upon the assumption of intellectual inferiority) “and it would most certainly injure the education of whites” (Clayton 2008:11). This appeal would stall Judge Gitelson’s

ruling in the courts until 1976 when it was upheld by the California Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruling decided, however, that the LAUSD was a case of de facto, not de jure segregation as Judge Gitelson had determined (a ruling that would prove to have a devastating impact on the desegregation effort; this will be discussed at length below), but that ultimately, it did not matter whether the segregation of the school district was de facto or de jure, so the district would still be required to take “reasonable and feasible steps to alleviate harms of racial segregation” (Clayton 2008: 13-14; US Commission on Civil Rights 1977). With this ruling, the oversight of the desegregation effort was handed back to the Los Angeles Superior Court, and Judge Paul Egly was appointed to oversee the actions taken by the school board. Quite possibly, much of the messiness that would transpire during the attempt to implement a plan to carry out an effective desegregation effort can be attributed to the Supreme Court’s vague language when it issued the mandate that the district must take “reasonable and feasible steps to alleviate harms of racial segregation.” Hence, the school board, Judge Paul Egly and the four interveners in the case – Better Education for Students Today (BEST), Bustop Inc. (Bustop), Citizens Advisory Committee on Student Integration (CACSI), and the Integration Project – would use the courthouse and the voting polls as sites to haggle over the proper means to carry out this mandate for the next 5 years (Clayton 2008; Daily Signal 1979; Evening Outlook 1980; Gionott 1978; McCurdy 1980c; Trombley 1977; Trombley 1979; Trombley 1980b).

During this time, prior to the implementation of a comprehensive

desegregation plan, two voluntary programs were pursued, both of which were designed to begin the desegregation of the district: Permits With Transportation (PWT) and the establishment of magnet schools. PWT was established in an effort to reassign students of color who attended overcrowded Racially Isolated Minority Schools (RIMS; minority is the language used in the legal documents of the time) to racially isolated white schools that had room for more students. The PWT program issued these students permits that allowed them to transfer to schools other than their “home” schools, and busing programs to transport them to these new schools. Magnet schools, As Penelope Simison noted in her 1979 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, “... were to be a bright spot, a lure, in the Los Angeles desegregation program. They were designed to attract students to their integrated classrooms with unique, educationally superior programs” (18). In 1978, a comprehensive desegregation plan proposed by the board and approved by Judge Egly was finally implemented following a series of appeals, mainly by the anti-integrationist group Bustop (Fitzgerald 1978; Ginott and Pristin 1978; HoSang 2010; Simison 1978). The plan involved both voluntary and involuntary components. In the first, voluntary phase of the plan, schools that were deemed racially isolated by the court (a definition that in itself privileged whites, a topic which will be discussed at length below) were given the chance to join a busing plan, which would successfully integrate its school. Any racially isolated school that refused to do so would be subject to mandatory busing in the second phase of the plan (Werkman 1979). The voluntary portion of the plan also continued the magnet school program.

The involuntary portion of the plan would aim to integrate the remaining racially isolated schools that had either failed to comply with the voluntary portion of the plan or had otherwise remained racially isolated following the implementation of the voluntary portion of the plan. The involuntary portion also established a pairing and cluster program that used a mandatory busing program to reassign students from racially isolated white schools to RIMS schools and vice versa (already, we can see the privileging of white students here as they are considered one group while all other groups are considered “minority;” this will also be discussed at length below). Paired schools involved two campuses while clustered schools involved more than two campuses.

Undoubtedly, the mandatory portion of the desegregation plan implemented by the school board was the most controversial. It was a rare case in the nation as it ran counter to the United States Supreme Court’s ruling in *Milliken v. Bradley*, which mandated that districts need not implement mandatory reassignment unless they had been charged with institutionalizing de jure segregation (US Supreme Court 1974). Although there is some evidence that members of several of the communities involved were against mandatory reassignment, the harshest, and most outspoken critics of this portion of the plan were whites from the San Fernando Valley who found a voice in the interest group and court intervener Bustop (Fitzgerald 1978; Ginott and Pristin 1978; HoSang 2010; Simison 1978). Conversely, civil rights groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) paid extensive legal fees

and advocated through appeals in the California and US Supreme Court to keep the mandatory busing program intact (Simison 1978).

Bustop would ultimately prove the victor in this battle with the passage of Proposition 1, which passed by a two to one margin on the November 1979 ballot and effectively ended mandatory busing (Trombley 1980a). Ironically, Proposition 1 evoked the 14th amendment, originally amended to the US constitution to protect the civil and human rights of formerly enslaved Africans, and made its case through the use of civil rights rhetoric as it mandated that any busing program must follow the equal protection clause included in the 14th amendment. The argument here was that Proposition 1 violated the rights of students forced into mandatory busing by denying them “the equal protection of the laws” (United States Supreme Court 1978). Adding to the irony is the fact that this is the same clause that formed the basis for the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision in 1954, which effectively outlawed de jure racial segregation in any school in the country.

The appropriation of civil rights rhetoric and the 14th amendment by anti-integrationists is not limited to proponents of Proposition 1, but is rather indicative of a broader trend among the right wing (and many on the left) to use colorblind ideology to dismantle many of the gains made in court during the civil rights movement. Although Bustop and other proponents of Proposition 1 would deny that the establishment and support of Proposition 1 was racially motivated, but was rather a result of parents simply wanting their children to go to their neighborhood schools for reasons of convenience, they offered no alternative solution to achieve integration,

nor suggestions for how their communities could assume any of the responsibility for achieving racial equity within the district (Fitzgerald 1978; Ginott and Pristin 1978; HoSang 2010; Simison 1978; Trombley 1980a). Had the California Supreme Court ruling of 1976 upheld Superior Court Judge Gitelson's ruling in 1970 that the LAUSD school board was guilty of de jure segregation, then Proposition 1 would have held no bearing in the desegregation of the LAUSD due to the fact that the US Supreme Court ruled in *Milliken v. Bradley* that de jure segregation was a violation of the equal protection clause, and attempts to remedy de jure segregation, such as mandatory busing, were deemed necessary steps to restore all students' "equal protection to the laws" (US Supreme Court 1974). However, because the California Supreme Court had changed the charge against the LAUSD school board to one of de facto segregation, anti-integrationists were able to use the same equal protection clause to construct Proposition 1 and effectively end mandatory busing within the LAUSD. In a move that shocked many pro-integrationists, The California Supreme Court refused to judge the merits of Proposition 1 in a case brought to the court by the ACLU and the NAACP because the court deemed the proposition to be in alignment with the constitution (Hollie 1981).

So complete was this irony, that when the NAACP and other opponents fought to overturn Proposition 1 in the US Supreme Court, the motion was struck down because "the court...ruled that because the law brought the California state constitution into greater alignment with the 14th Amendment it could in no way be interpreted as violating the Constitution" (Clayton 2008:19). Proposition 1 would

prove the fatal blow to any attempt to successfully integrate the LAUSD. ACLU attorney Fred Okrand would prove prophetic in his 1980 pronouncement made before the 2nd District Court of Appeal in Los Angeles on December 8, 1980 when he argued that "...the result of the passage of Proposition 1 would be to remove the only effective remedy for school segregation in Los Angeles – mandatory reassignment" (Trombley 1980a: II6). Over the ensuing years, the efforts made by groups seeking equal educational opportunities began "shifting towards adequacy spending and 'separate but equal' under a different name. Most were resigned to the fact that the LAUSD was and would always be segregated" (Clayton 2008:19). Today, the LAUSD remains highly segregated. According to a 2011 report conducted across six counties in Southern California by the Civil Rights Project of the University of California Los Angeles:

- In 2008, more than two out of five Latino students and nearly one-third of all black students in the region enrolled in intensely segregated learning environments--schools where 90-100% of students were from underrepresented minority backgrounds. Just 5% of Southern California's Asian students attended intensely segregated minority schools, and 2% of the region's white students did the same.
- White students made up 25% of the region's public school enrollment. Yet the average white student in Southern California attended a school that was nearly 50% white, a figure that highlights persistent patterns of disproportionate white isolation across the region.
- Together, white and Asian students made up 36% of the region-wide population. On average, however, black and Latino students in Southern California attended a school where less than a quarter of students are white and Asian (Kucsera et al. 2011).

Hence, the postponement of the implementation of a comprehensive desegregation plan by anti-integrationist interest groups and court interveners, and the weakening

(via Proposition 1) of the plan that was finally implemented can arguably be held to account for the persistence of racial segregation within the LAUSD today, a condition which is disproportionately experienced by black and Latino students throughout Southern California, particularly in schools that harbor “intensely segregated learning environments” (Kucsera et al. 2011).

Desegregation: Failures, Triumphs and the (Trans)Formation of the Self

Although the US Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Proposition 1 on June 30, 1982, a move which officially ended mandatory reassignment, three more phases of the desegregation plan would ensue for the next two decades, and many (albeit not most) students in the LAUSD would continue to attend magnet schools that provided integrated environments. Today, the LAUSD still maintains a Student Integrated Services branch, which focuses primarily on achieving integration through two remaining voluntary programs: the magnet schools and the Permits With Transportation program (Student Integration Services 2015). The following section will make use of interview and archival data to assess how the failures and successes of the desegregation effort were experienced by the youths who attended public schools in the LAUSD during the first ten years of the desegregation effort.

One of the primary visions of the desegregation effort was realized when students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds began attending integrated schools, and encountered, some for the first time, people from races and classes that they would not have encountered in their own neighborhoods and home schools.

Although the vision of diversity on the schoolyard was achieved in such settings, the actual impact of these new intercultural encounters upon the youths inducted into the desegregation effort can only be assessed through firsthand accounts from the students themselves. As Javier Mosley, guitarist for Proper Grounds and J. Mosley and the founder of the Sleepless Music Group, notes:

I had never seen a white person before I went to LACES (Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies, a magnet school located on Pico and Arlington, a predominantly black and Latino neighborhood)...I had to walk four blocks to go to LACES, and I never saw a white person, I mean up close and personal...I would see them on TV, and that was different. It was two-dimensional. But when I engaged them in conversations (at LACES), I was like, dude this is...(surprised facial expression). Really?

For Javier, his exposure to white students at LACES had a multitude of effects upon his (trans)formation of the self. As he notes:

Javier: And, I'll tell you man, I got confused for a while 'cuz I was like, man, I wish I was white. 'Cuz I saw all of the luxuries that were provided. Clothes...But my dad was like, "hey, this is our house, you're going to be a man this way." But I was like man, they (white people) got it easy. I want it *easy*. I don't want to have to like wake up at like 5 AM every morning and empty the garage so I could go out late, clean it up so I could go out for a couple of hours. I was like, dude, these kids probably just wake up when they want to wake up. And then really, my first real bonding with a dude like that (white dude) was with Eric, man, in the seventh grade.

Me: Yeah, what was that about man? How did you guys meet?

Javier: I despised him. 'Cuz he had that perfect hair, that ocean spray little flip (laughing and making fun in retrospect), you know, the perfect blue eyes you know, good skin, nice clothes, and I was just like the roughneck dude, guitar slung on my back, and just chillin', and I didn't like him 'cuz I just wanted to be that, and I didn't know how to deal with it, so I just told him, like let him know, "I don't like you"...The crazy thing about Eric man, what I love about that dude, he would always impart with me, be like "C'mon Javie man, you can do this. C'mon man, get it." And that was *huge*. And that came from a dude that I thought would never reciprocate to my kind of people, man.

And I'm not trying to be all like crazy about race, but that shocked me. I was like "This dude accepts me" (Mosley 2014).?

For the first time, Javier confronted white racial and class privilege on a daily basis. This frustrated him because he encountered white kids whose lives he perceived to be more leisurely and filled with luxury compared to his own. Their class privilege was most apparent to him in their clothing and his perception of them not having to do chores around the house. His kneejerk reaction was to hate them for this, but as he built relationships with some of his white peers, he came to realize that they looked upon him with admiration as well.

In retrospect, Javier is able to attribute some of his initial spite toward white students to internalized racism as well. As he notes, he "got confused for a while" and wished he were white. He didn't like Eric because he "wanted to be that." Internalized racism also surfaces for him as he comments on how he initially despised Eric because he possessed certain markers of whiteness that he perceived to be phenotypically superior such as wavy hair, "perfect blue eyes," and "perfect skin." Javier's laughter and joking manner as he discusses Eric's "perfect" looks, however, suggest that he has since rethought the internalized racisms that caused him to connect whiteness with superiority, and even finds it funny that he once thought the "ocean spray little flip" was something to admire. In fact, he said this about Eric in the tone of capping on – or making fun of – an old friend.

Ultimately, the desegregated school Javier attended allowed him to confront his internalized racism and his anger toward white people, and he eventually came to understand that the racial divide between himself – a half black, half Mexican-

American, or “Halfro-American” as he referred to himself in the interview – and white people was not as rigid as he had previously assumed. His realization that “this dude accepts me,” was, in a very real sense, a moment when Javier was able to expand upon his notions of community and cultural belonging. Today, Javier and Eric remain good friends. As Javier notes about the evolution of his friendship with Eric, “And we became like best friends.” This demonstrates that this form of community did not begin and end on the schoolyard. Rather, for Javier and Eric, such encounters yielded lifelong friendships and thus ongoing (trans)formations of the self

I, personally, had a similar experience to Javier’s, albeit from a very different racial and class position. I attended LACES from the 4th-7th grades – between 1984-1988. At that time, the campus was located in Mid City, a virtually all black and Latino neighborhood. Coming from the Community School, I was already familiar with integrated learning environments. However, while Community was strictly an elementary school, LACES housed students from 4th-12th grade, so the pecking order was more pronounced and sophisticated, like that of a high school. Within this order, white people with my class privilege were generally relegated to the realm of the naïve, and were thus given very little respect. Hence, while my racial and class privileges served me well in nearly every other setting in Los Angeles, they were stigmas on the desegregated schoolyard on Pico and Arlington. I was thus shocked when people without my privileges would still show me respect. Like Javier, I was taken aback with the realization that “this dude accepts me?,” and the friendships I was able to foster with those who did not share my privileges allowed me to expand

upon my existing notions of community and cultural belonging. I maintain many of these friendships until the present, and over the years, they have continuously afforded me invaluable opportunities to unpack the inevitable naivetè that race and class privilege produce. Hence, like Javier, the unique friendships I forged on the desegregated schoolyards have played a significant role in my ongoing (trans)formations of self.

Octavio Camacho, saxophonist for Section 8, Groovin' High and other projects, as well as the founder of the intercultural weekly jam session the Peace Pipe (which will be a primary focus of chapters 2 and 4), notes his experience of attending a different type of magnet school, one which failed to attract white students, and was thus eventually deemed by the court as failing to achieve integration:

Then my parents bought a house in 1978 on 118th Place...so we went there, and then I went to the schools there...93rd street...that was the first magnet school that I went to. So that was like a, just a magnet school, and it was in the hood, and it was kids from the hood going to a magnet school in the hood, so it wasn't like the magnet school like what we were talking about earlier about the integration...how they used the magnet schools to integrate the school system. Because it was all like the same kids...just the kids who lived like 2 or 3 miles away. They didn't live out in the valley. They didn't live out in different areas (Camacho 2014).

The magnet portion of schools such as 93rd street elementary were generally discontinued, and thus lost funding reserved for schools that were deemed to have successfully integrated, funding which was crucial to the upkeep of rigorous academic programs in these RIMS schools (Trombley 1980c). Octavio's recollection of attending 93rd Street Elementary School thus brings to light several troubling aspects of the desegregation effort, all of which stem from the fact that some of the

strongest forces working against the effort to establish integrated schools that offered equal access high quality education for students of all races were those actions taken by court itself, many of which upheld the very systems of white privilege and white supremacy that the court sought to undo.

For example, in order to enact a plan to successfully establish integrated schools that offered access to equal education for students of all races, the court needed to define precisely what would constitute an integrated school. All along, Judge Egly had “indicated that he (did) not consider a school to be desegregated unless it (had) at least 50% white enrollment” because this would be the only way to adhere to the decision of the California Supreme Court that ordered desegregation of Los Angeles schools (Trombley 1980b: II1). The definition that Egly would finally approve lumped all racial “minorities” into one group and whites into another, a stipulation that would prove highly problematic in and of itself. An integrated school, then, would require a higher percentage of whites than he had previously suggested and would be comprised of no less than 60% white enrollment, and no more than 40% “minority” enrollment (although, in practice, there would be some flexibility within these percentages). Judge Egly argued that, in addition to complying with the California Supreme Court orders, his reasoning for establishing this definition of an integrated school was that exposing “minorities” to a majority white student body would help them establish interpersonal networks with the dominant group, and such interpersonal networks would in turn grant them access to mainstream, lucrative professional networks that had historically been dominated by whites (Evening

Outlook 1980; Daily Signal 1979; McCurdy 1980b).

However well-intentioned Judge Egly's motives may have been, the end result for schools was that the desegregation effort became a song and dance to the tune of "How can we get more white kids to come to our school?" Thus, schools like 93rd Street Elementary, which were located in areas where whites chose not to send their children, were threatened with being discontinued and losing the extra funding provided by the courts for desegregated schools. The irony here is that this sort of privileging of white students and their families is precisely what the US Commission on Civil Rights was trying to undo when it argued that the "harms of racial isolation" were particularly devastating to "minority" communities and were the chief cause of unequal education in the LAUSD (United States Commission on Civil Rights 1977).

The fight to save Dublin Avenue Elementary School, another magnet school that failed to attract white students, is a case in point. A 1980 article in the *Los Angeles Times* entitled "Blacks Fight to Save School," sheds further light upon the plight of magnet schools located in communities of color that failed to attract white students:

A group of black parents is battling to save a school 'magnet' program (at Dublin Avenue Elementary School) in Leimert Park that is in jeopardy because it has failed to attract white students...Last year, only three white pupils enrolled. This year, there is one white, a third-grader, among Dublin Avenue's 572 students. Consequently, Dublin Avenue and 10 other magnets in minority Los Angeles neighborhoods that have not attracted many whites will be eliminated next year...But parents of Dublin students argue that they have an excellent educational offering that is serving the interests of minority students and that it is unfair to penalize those students because whites refuse to participate. 'It's ironic that a program that is doing so well is going to be done away with just because white parents are afraid to send their kids to this

part of this city,' said a parent, Vicky McDowell (Trombley 1980c: I3).

Ironic indeed. And this irony extends from the fact that, here, we see the workings of white privilege within the framework of desegregation as magnet schools that had succeeded in providing quality education to black and Latino communities were either threatened with having their budgets stripped, or worse yet, with being shut down completely merely because they had failed to attract white students. As Elvin Sanders, a parent leader at Dublin Avenue Elementary noted, "the (school) board 'is spending millions of dollars trying to defend its all-voluntary (desegregation) plan in court, but here we have an example of a successful voluntary program and they won't make the effort to keep it'" (Trombley 1980c: I3).

Sanders' use of the word "successful" here raises an important concern, one which gets to the very core of achieving racial equality in a country fraught with historical and institutionalized forms of racism and discrimination. How do we define success? If one of the US Commission on Civil Rights' primary concerns with segregated schools in the LAUSD was the fact that racial isolation was the chief cause of unequal education, but then a series of black and Latino schools is established that fail to desegregate, yet succeed in providing access to equitable education, should these schools still be considered successful in alleviating the "harms of racial isolation?" Could it be that the failures and horrors of the doctrine of "separate but equal" at previous moments in our nation's history meant that schools like Dublin Avenue Elementary school defied the racial logic of its time? Did the racial logic of the time prevent the courts from recognizing that adhering to a doctrine

that outright disregarded the potential success of “separate but equal” schools might actually undermine the successes of racially isolated black and Latino schools? Undoubtedly, this defies even the racial logic of our time, as, traditionally, the doctrine of “separate but equal” has been used to uphold systems of institutional discrimination, de jure segregation, and white supremacy. As Sanders notes, “We can’t retreat to a ‘separate but equal’ doctrine...because the Board of Education we have now would not give a black school the same kind of break they would give a white school” (Trombley 1980c: I8). As true as this may have been (and continues to be), Dublin Avenue Elementary presents us with an important question. If one of the harms associated with racial isolation (i.e. unequal education) can be alleviated without successfully integrating a school, then should we, in certain cases, rethink the association between desegregation and racial equality? As Ethel Davis, mother of a fourth grader at Dublin Avenue Elementary noted, “I welcome it (integration) and maybe it will happen someday, but I am more concerned about the education the kids are getting now” (Trombley 1980c: I8).

Undoubtedly, we can see how the racial logic of the time continued to privilege whiteness as the courts assumed that it could not establish equitable standards of education in schools unless white children attended them, in the majority nonetheless. With that said, I return to my original question of whether, in instances such as Dublin Avenue Elementary, we should rethink the inevitable failure of “separate but equal.” Or do the other harms of racial isolation – such as those cited by the Los Angeles Superior Court, “...lack of access to post-secondary education,

interracial hostility and intolerance, and overcrowded conditions” – justify prioritizing racial integration even in circumstances when one of the harms of racial isolation, in this case low academic achievement, has been alleviated in an environment that the court has defined as segregated (Student Integration Services 2016; US Commission on Civil Rights 1977)? These questions have become increasingly important in contemporary US society as systems of white supremacy and institutional racism continue to disadvantage black and brown populations. The failures of the desegregation effort of the LAUSD, then, offer us valuable questions as we move forward in our attempt to dismantle institutionalized systems of racism and discrimination: How, precisely, are we to measure success? Should the scope and focus for projects and activists driven by this endeavor be one of achieving diversity or equity? More importantly, can we achieve the latter without the former? Answering these questions will help us avoid the pitfalls that hindered many aspects of the LAUSD’s desegregation effort.

When Octavio Camacho left 93rd Street Elementary School, he was bussed to another, more integrated magnet school in Pacoima. He recalls this experience:

My first time that I was actually in a situation when I was in an integrated school was at Pacoima Middle School. It was called Pacoima Junior High School back then, 1980. Up to that point, living in south LA, or living in Norwalk, it was black and Latino, maybe in Norwalk there were like two white kids. Even here in South LA there was like one or two white kids, but mostly everybody was like black or Latino...So then I go to Pacoima middle school, and I’m like “Whoa.” It was the first time I saw like kids who were like middle class and upper middle class, you know? Kids who I was like thinking to myself like on Halloween, “man, your parents must have spent like over \$100 on your Halloween costumes.” You know? I was used to like going to K-mart with the little plastic masks, and you save it for next year so

your brother-or-sister-can-use-it-kind-of-deal, right? I'm like watching these kids, I go "Man, these kids are rolling pretty good! Where are these kids coming from? I know they're not from *my* neighborhood." That's when I got the real sense of integration. It was like a punch in the face. It wasn't like "Oh, I kind of discovered it." It was like (slaps his hands together) BOOM! Like oh, whoa, where did these kids come from? What's up with this? These kids speak differently. They talk about different things, you know? They were different in every regard. Even though we lived in the same city. We went to the same school. They were different in every possible regard (Camacho 2014).

Whereas Javier's experience at LACES unsettled his perception of the rigidity of the racial divide in the city, Octavio's experience at Pacoima Middle School heightened his sensitivity to those same cultural divisions. As he notes, "These kids speak differently. They talk about different things...Even though we lived in the same city. We went to the same school. They were different in every possible regard."

Octavio's experience speaks to how attending integrated schools actually served to further alienate some students as it amplified cultural divisions along racial and class lines. Octavio's first venture "across the tracks" – tracks which had been drawn as thin red-lines on maps by the FHA two decades prior and had continued to be used by the LAUSD to establish home schools for neighborhoods within its district – was a jolting experience. Integration, for Octavio, was violent – "a punch in the face...BOOM!" It is as if Octavio had a literal encounter with the structural violence committed against people of color by institutions such as the FHA and the LAUSD as he attended an integrated school and experienced, for the first time, the cultural differences produced by the historical racial and class hierarchy in the city.

Octavio begins his description of his first experience of integration in racial terms, "Up to that point, living in south LA, or living in Norwalk, it was black and

Latino, maybe in Norwalk there were like two white kids. Even here in South LA there was like one or two white kids, but mostly everybody was like black or Latino.” As the discussion progresses, however, he begins to emphasize class as the most salient marker of cultural difference at Pacoima Middle School. As he recounts his disbelief that kids at this new school had Halloween costumes that cost “over \$100,” he remarks, “man, these kids are rolling pretty good! Where are these kids coming from? I know they’re not from *my* neighborhood. That’s when I got the real sense of integration.”

As the interview progressed, Octavio continued to explore how the most pronounced cultural differences he experienced were class divisions, not racial ones.

As he notes:

When I was there (Pacoima Middle School), I felt closer, culturally closer, to the black and Latino kids from the city than I did with the Latino kids from the suburbs, from Pacoima. I made a better connection with the black and Latino kids from my neighborhood because, you know, we saw the world that way. It was a class thing. We didn’t call it class, but later on when I learned what class was, I knew exactly, I made that connection, “Oh, that’s what that is” (Camacho 2014).

Octavio puzzles through this, and in so doing, recognizes a major flaw in the desegregation effort – that it used race as the sole marker of difference and barometer by which successful integration would be measured, thus ignoring the cultural differences produced through class disparities among members of the same racial group (Daily Signal 1979):

As a general rule, because Pacoima Middle School was in the suburbs, there were some kids in the neighborhood who were probably middle class that were Latinos. Because the school, before it was a magnet school, was like predominantly Latino. It is in a Latino neighborhood. And then you had the

magnet school. And the magnet school brought in white kids, brought in black kids, brought in Asian kids, brought in other Latino kids from the city, urban as opposed to the suburban, you know? But they didn't count that, but they weren't the same as the suburban Latino kids. You could tell the difference who were the kids from the neighborhood who were Latino and who were the kids from outside the neighborhood that were Latino. Like myself (Camacho 2014).

Octavio's recognition that he "made a better connection with the black and Latino kids from my neighborhood because, you know, we saw the world that way," speaks to a worldview, a community and sense of cultural belonging that is produced through shared class affiliation rather than racial ones. Octavio's comment that, "the magnet school brought in white kids, brought in black kids, brought in Asian kids, brought in other Latino kids from the city, urban as opposed to the suburban, you know? But they didn't count that, but they weren't the same as the suburban Latino kids," calls attention to the fact that the courts responsible for the desegregation effort focused solely on race in its effort to integrate the LAUSD. In so doing, they were upholding a tendency in this country to homogenize groups based on race, and ignore the intersection of race and class that leads to large discrepancies among the experiences of members of the same racial group. Of course, we cannot be so naive as to ignore the interrelatedness of race and class in this country. It is no secret that black and brown people experience disproportionate rates of poverty when compared to whites (McCartney et al. 2013). However, to assume that racial integration will inevitably integrate along class lines is to ignore class diversity within racial groups. This is especially important when considering stories such as Octavio's, as his (trans)formation of the self was both a racialized and class-based experience, and in

the case of Pacoima Middle School, class trumped race as a marker of cultural belonging for Octavio.

As the interview progressed, Octavio touched upon another flaw in the desegregation effort – the failure of the courts, the school district, and the court interveners to include in its efforts the establishment of a multicultural curriculum. He begins this discussion by exploring how his neighborhood school segregated students who spoke English “well” from those who did not. As he notes:

Even when I was at the school (93rd Street), at the elementary school before I got there (Pacoima Middle School), many times I was the only Latino in the class, because I was in the gifted class, and most of the time they wouldn't qualify you if you didn't speak English well. Many times I found that I was the only Latino person in that class. So even then, before I was really an outcast (at Pacoima Middle School), I was an outcast (Camacho 2014).

Here, Octavio is noting the alienation he felt, a perpetual outsider status, at both his home school and the magnet school he attended in Pacoima. The alienation he felt in Pacoima was the result of racial and class differences he encountered for the first time. However, the alienation he felt at 93rd Street Elementary was the result of a broader Eurocentric curriculum that used English fluency as a barometer for intelligence, and employed the categorical designation of “gifted” to segregate learning environments for students within the same racial and class groups. Octavio's recollection of students being treated as less intelligent because they lacked a handle on standard English was not only experienced by Latinos who had, presumably, grown up with Spanish speaking parents, however. In a 1979 *Los Angeles Times* article, one of the years that Octavio attended 93rd Street Elementary, William

Raspberry explored how black students who spoke “non-standard English” or “black English” were also treated as “less intelligent,” or “inferior.” The article covers a lawsuit filed by the families of eleven elementary school students against the LAUSD for the psychological trauma inflicted against the children by teachers who treated them as inferior due to their struggles with “standard” English. It reads:

Four of Gabe Kaimowitz’s (the lawyer representing the children) 11 young clients are in speech therapy. Three others have been classified as “learning disabled.” Three of the other four would have been socked away in one negative category or another but for the efforts of their mothers. What is wrong with them? Nothing...except that they speak a “foreign language” (III6).

The article argues that “many teachers equate nonstandard English with low intelligence” (III6). As Gabe Kaimowitz argues, “When a 5-year-old has his language system treated as inferior from his first day of school, the resulting psychological damage is inevitable...Once this barrier is raised by school officials, the child begins to withdraw, and his learning performance suffers” (Raspberry 1979: III6). We see here that white supremacy was not only alive and well in magnet schools vying to attract the coveted body of white students, or as *Times* staff writer William Trombley referenced it, “by tapping the unused supply of white students” (1979: II5). Rather, even in schools with virtually no white students in attendance, such as 93rd Street Elementary, the practice of using a student’s handle on “standard” English to measure intelligence, or in Octavio’s case, to stratify the student population along gifted/non-gifted lines, proved a powerful force in further excluding students of color from access to advanced educational opportunities in the LAUSD during the beginning of the desegregation effort.

HoSang also speaks to this failure of the courts to include in the desegregation effort the establishment of a multicultural curriculum:

The first California Superior Court ruling in Crawford in 1970 determined that the LAUSD had intentionally segregated Black and Chicano students into inferior schools and that such segregation caused serious harm. But the court's desegregation order made no mention of bilingual or bicultural education and made no distinctions among the needs of Black, Chicano, or Asian American students. In 1976, following five years of appeals by the school board, the Supreme Court of California affirmed this ruling, again treating Black and Mexican American students as essentially interchangeable with regards to desegregation...At the same time, most desegregation advocates and political leaders mirrored the court's indifference to bilingual education programs (2014: 125-26).

It is ironic that this lack of a multicultural curriculum, one which catered to cultures with varying levels of fluency with "standard" English, would become a divisive political issue between the black and Latino communities during the desegregation effort, particularly concerning the passage of Proposition 1. After all, both black and Latino students faced discrimination based upon their English "skills." Additionally, students from both communities were treated as interchangeable by the district and the courts as they were all lumped into the "minority" category, and both black and Latino students were severely disadvantaged by the Eurocentric curriculum within the LAUSD. Nevertheless, the failure of pro-integrationists to institute a multicultural curriculum as part of the desegregation effort, particularly one that incorporated bilingual education into the curriculum, would provide a point of entry for white anti-integrationists to rally support for anti-integration measures, such as Proposition 1, within the Latino community, thus creating a divide between black and Latino community advocacy during the desegregation effort.

In 1979, white anti-integrationists who fought to rally support for Proposition 1 – the proposition to end mandatory bussing in the district – found support among members of the Latino community who feared that mandatory reassignment would disperse Latino students across the district in thin numbers, thus hindering their effort to establish and maintain bilingual educational opportunities in their neighborhood schools (HoSang 2014). Indeed, one of the main anti-integration talking points within the Latino community pitched by proponents of Proposition 1 was that ending mandatory busing (a costly but arguably crucial component of the desegregation effort) would set aside a reserve of funds that could then be used for bilingual education programs (HoSang 2014). With this, State Senator Alan Robbins, the author of Proposition 1, was able to recruit political leaders and activists from the Latino community into the anti-integration movement. Within the black community, however, there was a strong current of opposition to Proposition 1, which is evidenced by the fact that black voters within Los Angeles voted down the proposition by a two-to-one margin (HoSang 2014).

For the sake of not homogenizing entire racial communities into one perspective, however, this rift between the black and Latino communities over Proposition 1 and mandatory reassignment should not be overemphasized, as Robbins *was* able to rally some support from members of the black community, a fact that “reflected the growing demands for ‘community control’ of schools sounded by both Chicano and even some Black political leaders who had grown apprehensive of a desegregation debate that rarely seemed to include their participation or perspective”

(HoSang 2014: 131). As Clinton Cameron – the African American percussionist and drummer for Section 8 (and many other projects) – who attended magnet schools or schools that hosted a magnet program for much of his grade school career, noted in an interview, “You know, I don’t think that forced integration idea was all that great” (Cameron 2013). Clinton’s indifference, or possibly even opposition, to desegregation speaks to the importance of acknowledging the variety of perspectives within the African American community (and all communities) concerning desegregation during this era. So often, the talking points by the NAACP suggested that the entire black community was a unified proponent of the desegregation effort, but, as Clinton notes, this was not the case. In fact, as a 1978 article from the *Los Angeles Times* entitled “NAACP Member Rebuked; Busing Study Continued” notes, the Valley Chapter of the NAACP “severely reprimanded one of its members for publicly questioning the 25-year-old NAACP stand on busing as a means to achieve desegregation” (Willman: no pg #).

As an aside, it is also important to note that Clinton’s use of the term “forced integration” speaks to how segregation had become deeply engrained as a naturalized ideology and institution when, in fact, there was nothing “natural” about it at all. As I have argued above, it had been purposefully and strategically established and maintained by the local government, the FHA, white residents, and real estate moguls throughout the 20th century – yet another example of how constructions erected through social and political processes come to possess an air of “naturalness” over time. This is the very process through which discrimination becomes

institutionalized, as purposeful and strategic policies erect discriminatory systems that eventually become naturalized and self-perpetuating, thus removing the need for conscious actors to maintain them. In this sense, it was segregation, not integration, that was “forced,” yet it had come to embody such a powerful air of naturalness over time that Clinton’s use of the term “forced integration” makes intuitive sense.

Ultimately, however, Robbins’ ability to recruit Latino political leaders as proponents of Proposition 1 allowed the proposition, and the anti-integration movement more broadly, to maintain a façade of what James Baldwin, and later Daniel HoSang, refer to as “racial innocence,” when in fact, the proposition was anything but non-racially motivated (Baldwin 1963; HoSang 2010). In fact, Robbins’ and his supporter’s anti-racist claims became thin, at best, when a memo distributed by the proponents of Proposition 1 surfaced that:

suggested targeting particular middle-class white communities across the state in fundraising appeals by referencing the nearby ‘undesirable areas’ to which their children might be bused. Thirteen predominantly Black or Chicano neighborhoods across the state were listed, next to an adjoining white neighborhood or city whose residents could be targeted for an anti-busing direct mail appeal. “South Central Los Angeles” and “East Los Angeles” were identified as the “undesirable areas” within Los Angeles County (HoSang 2014: 131).

Furthermore, following the passage of Proposition 1, anti-integrationists did nothing to follow through with promises of diverting mandatory busing funds to bilingual education programs. In fact, they vehemently opposed such programs and took it upon themselves to make bilingual education and language rights the next target for abolition:

The attacks on bilingual education and language rights began almost immediately after the busing debate subsided. In 1984, an emerging group of immigration restriction activists successfully passed ballot measures putting the state on record against the mandatory provision of bilingual voting materials. In 1986, the same group passed a measure to declare English the official language of the state. By the mid 1990s, when ballot initiatives were launched seeking to bar undocumented immigrants from public schools and to ban bilingual education entirely, Robbins was already out of politics (HoSang 2014: 135-36).

As opposed to the overt racism of the first half of the 20th century, this form of racism, one that takes a tone of racial innocence yet perpetuates systems of institutionalized racism, was birthed in the post-civil rights/desegregation era.

Whereas the whites in Southgate in the 1940's who enacted racial covenants to keep their neighborhoods restricted to non-whites perpetrated an overt form of racism, the whites in the San Fernando Valley, who formed groups such as Bustop and pushed for the passage of Proposition 1, engaged a more covert form of racism cloaked in colorblind rhetoric that they had, ironically, appropriated from civil rights activists of the 1960s. The suburbs in Los Angeles, including Southgate and Westchester in the first half of the 20th century and the San Fernando Valley in the latter half, were born as whites began to take advantage of FHA loans that were reserved almost exclusively for whites (Avila 2004). This allowed whites to build equity and amass wealth throughout the century, while people of all other races were denied access to such opportunities. Until 1971, public schools in Los Angeles were funded entirely by local property taxes, and they remain jointly funded by local property tax and state income and sales tax until the present (LAUSD 2015). Thus, the wealth and property amassed by whites prior to the desegregation era benefited the schools in the suburbs

formed from the FHA's lending practices (due to higher gross revenue from property taxes for those schools) and simultaneously left the schools in the city horribly underfunded. This, combined with the redlining practices and the intentional districting of schools within the LAUSD along the same racial lines used for residential loaning practices, created the phenomenon of well-funded white schools in the suburbs juxtaposed against poorly funded, often times dilapidated, schools of color in the city. White anti-integrationists who fought to end mandatory busing were essentially denying any responsibility for this disparity in access to equal education, thus placing nearly all of the burden to rectify the harms of segregation upon students of color who would have to join a voluntary desegregation program and take buses to the suburbs or richer Westside neighborhoods in order to take advantage of more well-funded schools. The passage of Proposition 1, and the covert racism of groups like Bustop, were thus catalysts in the rise of post-civil rights colorblind racism as groups of whites who benefited from a century of institutionalized racism were allowed to opt out to of a desegregation effort aimed at rectifying the very inequalities that afforded them their wealth and privilege. Proposition 1 gave whites a pass on addressing decades of institutional racism, yet it was drafted and cast in a tone of racial innocence and upheld by the US Supreme Court through, of all things, the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The irony is painful because the irony is real.

While Octavio's story exposes some of the limits of the desegregation effort, one of the primary aspirations of the effort was realized in the experiences of another

interviewee, Joey Derusha (founder of the Alef Project, Reeds and flute player for Ancestry of Sound and multi-instrumentalist for countless other projects). Robert A. Dentler, head of a social science research firm out of Cambridge Mass in 1980, voiced this aspiration of the desegregation effort in a 1980 article from the *Los Angeles Times*: “Dentler said multiethnic schools afford greater cultural exchange, which he said is valuable in removing the effects of racial isolation and also in exposing students to the cultural strengths each ethnic group possesses” (McCurdy 1980c: II6). This was the underlying assumption of the desegregation effort, that “exposure” (as it is referred to in the article) to students of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds would create some sort of common ground through which steps toward achieving racial equality could be taken – that “exposure” and the end of “racial isolation” would facilitate an understanding and embracement of cultural difference among students who attended desegregated schools, and that this, in turn, would lead to the establishment of multicultural communities with the potential to redistribute power and privilege and unsettle historical processes of white supremacy. For Javier Mosley, this aspiration was realized as he noticed the commonalities between himself and white students who, as he states, “I thought would never reciprocate to my kind of people.” For other students, white students in particular, “exposure” would mean facing head on the antagonisms that had been formed in communities of color due to decades of enduring the ravages of white supremacy. Consider Joey’s account of becoming aware of his own white privilege:

Joey: Not that I haven’t had cops mess with me throughout my life, but for the most part, if I am respectful, then they are respectful back to me

DW: Are you saying because you're white?

Joey: Yeah. I mean I haven't had that experience where it's just like. You know, I may have had some encounters with police where I could tell that the people were just jerks, but they don't end with me getting my ass kicked. Or getting thrown in jail for nothing... Well, that happened to me once (laughing, then becomes serious again), but I still got out with everything, and I'm OK, you know what I mean? It's not like a repeated pattern... and I have always been aware that that's been happening (to people who are not white).

DW: How were you aware of that?

Joey: Part of it does have to do with the magnet schools and, being in, subjected to so many different people who have different experiences from me, and being able to talk to them and listen to them, ya know? And even feel their resentment toward me (Derusha 2013).

Of course, when whites stay within the confines of all-white or nearly all-white communities, they never have to face this “resentment.” Indeed, part of white privilege is the ability to ignore this “resentment;” or to delegitimize it with disingenuous claims like #alllivesmatter; or, in the case of the formation of the LA suburbs, to run away from it by taking advantage of the creation of federally funded “whites only” communities where their privilege blends in with the scenery; or, in the case of the desegregation effort, to insulate themselves from it by pushing through measures like Proposition 1 so as to avoid ever coming into contact with people of color and the “undesirable” neighborhoods that Robbins’ direct-mail memo warned them about.

For Joey, however, attending the magnet schools forced him to sit with this resentment. And, rather than becoming defensive and walking away from it or, worse yet, violently pushing back against it (things that did also happen in the desegregated

schools), Joey took advantage of the “cultural strengths,” offered to him – in the form of resentment – by people who did not share his privilege, and were thus not naive to the workings of white supremacy. The magnet schools, then, became a site where Joey underwent a (trans)formation of self as he came to terms with his privilege. He is thus able to grapple with uncomfortable realities such as incarceration and police brutality and how they are disproportionately experienced by people of color – subjects often dismissed as race baiting by whites who have never sat with the resentment Joey experienced on the schoolyard, and have thus never reflected introspectively upon such matters as Joey does in the passage above. In this sense, the resentment on the integrated schoolyard became a transformative force in Joey’s life, and, as we will see in the following chapter, a driving force in his music.

For others, the desegregated schoolyard was not as desegregated as one might imagine – and definitely not as much as the courts and pro-integrationists had envisioned. Even though youths from different neighborhoods, and thus different racial groups, attended the same schools, the schoolyards they shared remained largely segregated as students formed cliques along racial lines. This is owing to the fact that, as previously discussed, segregation, as an institution and an ideology, had become naturalized throughout the twentieth century as formerly multicultural neighborhoods (such as Boyle Heights, East Los Angeles and South Los Angeles) became segregated communities via the FHA’s practice of redlining and white resident’s enactment of restrictive covenants, and all white suburbs were created through the FHA’s discriminatory loaning practices. Ulises Bella (saxophonist and

clarinetist for Yesca and Ozomatli) speaks to this social psychological phenomenon of segregation as a naturalized ideology as he discusses his first experience of being bussed outside of his neighborhood. Previously, he had been attending what the courts classified as a Racially Isolated Minority School (RIMS) in his neighborhood of Bell, an incorporated city in Los Angeles County. As he notes, “Cuz I started elementary school here, like a block away from where I live. (Grade) 1-5 was there, so what is that? Yeah, everything that lives through here. All Mexican kids basically. A token handful of white kids, maybe one Asian kid, right” (Bella 2014)? In sixth grade, however, due to his mother’s insistence that he attend a more well-funded school – one that she hoped would provide him a higher quality education – Ulises began taking the bus to attend a magnet school in West Hollywood:

Already starting in the 6th grade my Mom was already wanting to bus me. Because my mom was big on education...the junior high that I was supposed to go to was notorious for being fucked up. They were like “Yo, you gotta go to a different school.” (So he was bussed). It was just for one year, and it was 6th grade. That was this funky school called Open School that was behind the Norms [a greasy spoon diner turned historical monument] on La Cienega [in West Hollywood] (Bella 2014).

However, for Ulises, attending a magnet school did not automatically translate into integration. As he notes:

That’s where I met Mario, dude. And why? ‘Cuz he was like the only other brown kid in the class. And we just were like, let’s-be-homies-kind-of-shit. Which is that initial, kind of like, you go with what you know, right? Very similar to prisoner mentality almost (laughs). Like “OK, those kids look like me, I’m going over there.” Everybody else was like super rich Jewish kids. You know?... And that was like my first introduction to *that* part of town. It was like “Yo, fools were living in the Hollywood Hills type shit” (Bella 2014).

For Ulises, his “first introduction to *that* part of town” prompted him to seek out friendships with the students he perceived to be most like himself, and, due to coming from a racially segregated Mexican community, Ulises sought out other “brown” people for the “let’s-be-homies-kind-of-shit” because his initial reaction, when confronted with cultural difference, was to go with what he knew. And why was “brown” what he knew? Because segregation had become a naturalized ideology for him. Ulises, who is half Mexican-American and half Spanish, had grown up in a neighborhood that was “all Mexican kids basically,” and his (trans)formation of self, until this point, had been a racialized (trans)formation in a setting in which his “brown” identity had been institutionally (trans)formed through decades of de jure segregation. Thus, Ulises “natural” inclination was to befriend other brown people like those from his neighborhood. In this sense, desegregated schools did not necessarily undo the workings of segregation. Rather, some magnet schools became institutions that further naturalized the ideology of segregation as social interactions among students whose “natural” inclinations led them to embrace the “go with what you know” ideology prompted the formation of cliques along racialized lines.

Ulises discusses this further in reference to John Burroughs Junior High School, the middle school he attended in Hancock Park (a predominantly white neighborhood just south of Hollywood):

I think, from what I remember. The people in our clique were multi-racial. There were all kinds, but then I do remember, there was obviously, definitely cliques that were based on race too. Black kids, Latino kids, Korean kids, the Jeffrox kids (Filipino gang)...and the this, and that, and whoever the fuck. I totally remember that (Bella 2014).

Ulises' use of the words "obviously" and "definitely" in reference to the formation of "cliques that were based on race" speaks powerfully to the naturalizing force that decades of institutionalized segregation had had upon the psyche of Los Angeles residents. Not only was it "natural" to "go with what you know," but this was an "obvious" and "definite" inclination for kids who had grown up in a city heavily segregated along racialized lines. With this said, Ulises alludes to the fact that, by this point, he had joined a clique that was "multi-racial." And interestingly, the common thread among this clique, what brought this multi-racial group together, was music. As he notes:

It was all types (the people in the clique), and what was it kind of based on? It was definitely based on what kind of *music* you listened to...a lot of it, I think, had to do with the music and the scene and the vibe, you know...definitely punk, but then not everybody was a straight up punker. I remember like some people were all into metal, and some people were all into whatever the fuck, you know. Kind of the misfits and the weirdoes a little bit, but somehow, at the same time, we weren't the outcasts...Quite the contrary (Bella 2014).

It is here that we begin to see the transformative effect that integrated schools had upon Ulises. In the midst of an integrated school, divided, for the most part, by cliques formed along racial lines, one interracial clique coalesced – a clique that would not be possible in the racially isolated schools throughout the district. Ulises' clique had banded together a group of "misfits" and "weirdoes" – youths who were branded as such because they did not feel a sense of belonging within the racialized cliques that otherwise populated the schoolyard – with the centralizing forces of music and "otherness." This clique was an anomaly in that its members had expanded upon their notions of cultural belonging with markers that extended beyond

the confines of race. They had used music to establish an identity of “misfit” or “weirdo” that ran counter to the racializing tendencies on the schoolyard. In this sense, cliques such as Ulises’ had begun the important work of denaturalizing segregation as an institution and an ideology. And, interestingly, the youths in Ulises’ clique had engaged this form of cultural work by employing “punk” and “metal” and other forms of popular culture. This is a powerful example of how popular music can be used to perform the cultural work of destabilizing ideologies that have become naturalized through decades of historical processes and institutional practices. Moreover, it shows how this destabilizing work can be achieved through racialized musical genres (e.g., punk and metal) that in other contexts helped to *stabilize* these same ideologies.

Furthermore, it is important to note Ulises’ assertion that his clique’s outsider status did not relegate them to the social standing of the unpopular. As he notes “somehow, at the same time, we weren’t the outcasts...Quite the contrary.” This speaks to an openness, even within this highly segregated school, to begin to rethink community along lines other than race. His clique was not branded as outcasts. Rather, they were looked upon with some degree of respect. They had “juice” so to speak. In this sense, John Burroughs Junior High School, the desegregated school Ulises attended, provided a space for youths to begin to test the waters of integration, to begin to rethink cultural belonging, sameness, and difference in terms that were not entirely racialized. In so doing, they had begun to denaturalize the ideology of segregation.

In another interview, Devon Jackson-Kali, bassist for Product of Stone, Strange Fruit and the Hillside, also spoke to the idea that magnet schools became sites where cliques began to coalesce around commonalities not entirely restricted to race, with music as a primary source of cohesion for such groups. As he notes:

My mom put me in schools where there was a great mix of people, very purposefully...I hung out with every culture, and I'm talking about from the jocks, to the Asians, to the blacks to the Latinos to the musicians, to the musical theatre, wherever. I was always just group jumping, so when you're talking about that desegregation? Just the fact that you could do that in one school, that I could do that in all three (magnet) schools that I went to (Jackson-Kali 2014).

Devon elaborates further on the peculiar, and particular, power that music possessed to destabilize racialized ideologies when I probed him further about the cliques he identified without a racialized term:

DW: Let me ask you a question about those cliques real quick, dude. You said jocks, Latinos, musicians. Did you find that the cliques that weren't about race, like the jocks and the musicians, were still racialized in the sense that they were mostly one race?

Devon: The jocks were mostly blacks when I was in junior high school. The gangsters were mostly Latinos. The dancers were multicultural. The musicians were multicultural. Music tends to kind of break all those barriers. It allows people to not have to join the group that they are supposed to join...Literally, I would get hit up by gangsters from somewhere else, but they'd see I was carrying a guitar, so it was nothing for me. "I'm a musician homie, I don't bang" you know. And they go "Alright then. Alright. Do what you do." And that was the end of it, you know? Like literally, it was like carrying a hall pass on my back (Jackson-Kali 2014).

For Devon, music allowed him to jump between cliques and join cliques that coalesced around music, not race. It also allowed him to diffuse tensions that were formed when he was viewed as being out of place. When gangsters hit him up, trying to relegate him to the racialized space of gang culture that he experienced on the

schoolyard, Devon was able to avoid the confrontation by claiming the identity of musician. As he asserts later in the interview, music provided him a “get out of gang free card.” Most important to this discussion, however, is Devon’s assertion that music allowed “people to not have to join the group that they are supposed to join.” After all, what is a hall pass? It is a badge of some sort that allows students to walk the halls during class time, a space that is otherwise off limits to students during these hours. Devon’s remark that carrying his guitar around “was like carrying a hall pass on my back” speaks powerfully to the idea that music allowed him and his peers to explore areas that were otherwise off limits to them due to their race, thus allowing them “to not have to join the groups they (were) supposed to join.” If segregation, as a naturalized institution and ideology, had pre-determined group membership for students based on their race, or, as Devon notes, had created groups that students were “supposed to join,” then this hall pass – aka music – was a force that would allow integrated schools to become sites where the ideology of segregation could begin to become destabilized, and thus denaturalized.

This form of cultural work performed in the desegregated schools was the primary force that gave rise to many of the intercultural music scenes in the 1980s and 90s in Los Angeles, a phenomenon that will be explored further in the next chapter. It is important to note, however, that this form of cultural work not only gave rise to new music scenes, but was also made possible through the establishment of interracial cliques that used music as the coalescing force. In this sense, intra- and inter-racial differences *and* similarities were negotiated through music, and music

was both a catalyst *and* a product of these negotiations. The music that emerged during this era, then, was not merely a reflection of the transformative ideologies and (trans)formations of self that had begun to take root on the desegregated schoolyards of Los Angeles. Rather, the music was both a reflection *and* a tool used to actively construct the new possibilities, and communities, that emerged in the desegregation era.

As we have seen, the integrated schools in the LAUSD served to further alienate some students from cultural groups that were different from those to which they were accustomed, while, for others, the schools provided a space to negotiate new forms of cultural difference and expand upon their notions of cultural belonging. In some instances, the integrated schools served to further naturalize the intuition and ideology of racial segregation, while in others, the schools became sites where students actively engaged intercultural community building, thus destabilizing the ideologies upon which segregation had been premised. Some of the court's mandates merely served to uphold institutionalized forms of white supremacy, while others created magnets that made it possible for students to engage forms of interculturality that began to destabilize broad historical currents that had propagated white supremacy. In some instances, the schools became sites where racial violence was exacerbated, while in other instances (sometimes even at the same school) the schools provided a space for interculturality to become naturalized, to become a starting point for community building, rather than a goal to achieve. If anything, what is clear is

that diversity, in itself, makes no promises. As Joey Derusha noted in an interview, “Because you can have diversity. It does not necessarily create interculturalism. Diversity does not create interculturalism *by itself*. It could create riots. There has to be something highlighting the beneficial connections between diverse elements” (Derusha 2013).

The next chapter will explore how intercultural music scenes emerged during the desegregation era as music became this “something highlighting the beneficial connections between diverse elements.” Regardless of whether my interviewees’ experiences in the integrated schools served to heighten or diffuse racial antagonisms, students who attended these schools experienced a (trans)formation of self within an environment, or to use Clinton Cameron’s term, “a social fabric,” marked by interculturality (Cameron 2014). As opposed to previous eras in Los Angeles marked by legally enforced segregation, this generation was thrown in the fire of so to speak - left to work out decades of racial hostility and social inequality on the schoolyard – and, for many, music became a primary means through which they negotiated this potentially emancipatory, yet often volatile, social environment marked by new forms of intercultural encounters. Let us now turn to the intercultural music scenes that were established during the desegregation era as students who attended integrated schools took their experiences, their “social fabrics,” their (trans)formations of self, and their music from the schoolyard to the stage.

Chapter II

“Let’s Take It to the People; Let’s Take It to the Stage”:

Mapping Intercultural Bands and Scenes from the Schoolyard to the Stage in Desegregation Era Los Angeles

DW: I’m wondering. Obviously you (Ozomatli) formed as a band at the Peace and Justice Center (the most well-known narrative about Ozomatli’s formation), but you guys already had this kind of interpersonal network where you knew of, or knew, each other.

Ulises: Yeah that’s all like LA...bussing shit too. Cuz Wil Dog (bassist) went to 32^{ns} (Street K-12 Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Cinematic Arts and Engineering Magnet School). A lot of fools went to Hami (Alexander Hamilton High School – Music and Humanities Magnet). I knew Justin (percussionist) from Hami. Asdru (guitarist, singer) went to Hami. Uh, our original, one of our original sax players who passed away went to Hami too.

DW: So that was all bussing? Cuz you guys are from all over...huh?

Ulises: Yeah, so a lot of that had to do, exactly that, even in the beginning of Ozo. I knew Anton ‘cuz he was the drummer from Yesca. Anton knew Wil Dog ‘cuz he was part of that Conservation Corps shit. And when they started jamming, Anton called me first like, “hey you wanna jam with this band. We are trying to raise money for cool causes.” “Yeah, let me do this. I’ll call my homie, Crunchy,” who went to Hami. “Oh, you know Crunchy too? Oh yeah so and so.” So definitely the circles were like overlapping, especially for the schools and the scenes, you know? Whether it was the valley, Hollywood, fucking you name it, you know?

~Excerpt from interview with Ulises Bella
Saxophonist and Clarinetist for Ozomatli

The previous chapter began to establish how, on the desegregated schoolyards, music became a factor that cohered groups of students who, for various reasons, did not allow race to predetermine the cliques they joined. This chapter aims

to further establish this assertion and build upon it by demonstrating how these intercultural, interpersonal networks established on the desegregated schoolyards blossomed into intercultural bands and scenes, thus pushing the boundaries of cultural innovation, inclusiveness and interracial community building into public spaces beyond the gates that enclosed the schoolyard. As opposed to previous periods in the city's history that were marked by legally enforced racial segregation, this was an era in which Los Angeles youth were afforded an unprecedented state-sanctioned opportunity to establish intercultural, interpersonal networks at a young age. This chapter situates these youths' experiences within this historical context, and explores how they made use of music to negotiate these new forms of intercultural encounters and notions of cultural belonging, which expanded beyond, but did not negate, the centrality of ethnic and racial affiliations to their (trans)formations of self.

From the Schoolyard to the Stage: Desegregated Schools Beget Intercultural Bands and Scenes

When Clinton Cameron (who eventually formed and played percussion and drums for the locally legendary intercultural ensemble, Section 8, and went on to play with countless acts including Fishbone and the Breakestra) stepped onto the schoolyard at Hamilton High School (a humanities magnet that would also become a music magnet the year after Clinton graduated) in the mid 1980s, he immediately knew which crew he wanted to join. Decked out in an indefinable garb far ahead of the time, the members of this group defied all attempts at categorization. Like Clinton, they were, for the most part, black students whose life experience had led

them to push the boundaries of style and music, and they had resisted the racializing tendency on the schoolyard to assign black students to styles of music and dress which emerged solely through hip hop and R&B Culture – a racializing tendency that was especially pronounced and disciplinary when black youths attempted to push the envelope. Clinton discusses the flack he received from other people, both white and black, for not conforming to what was considered black music at the time:

All of a sudden, these Jewish and white kids are in my face trying to school me about hip hop. And I'm like "Dude, I ain't even trying to hear it." Hip hop is going to die in a year," and it didn't, you know? So now they have a high horse about it? Like, "Aww, I was into hip hop early." Like, "Dude, I was trying to do something different. You have the *privilege* of doing something different, and nobody is even going to question you about it." You know?

How many black kids are listening to Black Flag (a heavy punk band)? A handful. "We're not trying to tell you how to fuckin' listen to punk rock." You know?...I don't want to sound like a whining, you know, a black person that's angry, but it was kind of a trip because black people were looking at me at Hamilton (High School) like, "Who the fuck is Fishbone?"...And then, you started to notice how R&B started to go soft...So I wasn't into New Edition, and you know that whiny ass "aaah ahhh ahhh" (imitating lead singers of R&B bands he is describing). I wasn't into A1 B. Sure and all that shit. I didn't want to fuckin' hear that shit, you know?...But what about the black kids that were listening to punk rock? What about 'em? They got like dismissed. What about the Hispanics at Self Help Graphics (a non-profit visual arts center located first in East Los Angeles and then in Boyle Heights that serves "the predominantly Latino community of Los Angeles" [selfhelpgraphics: 2016]) that didn't even put a record out? History erased (Cameron 2014).

This is the type of policing of racialized boundaries that Clinton had to endure as a black youth and musician in the 1980s and 1990s who "was trying to do something different." His point is underscored here by the mere fact that, during the interview, he felt the need to stress that he didn't want "to sound like a whining...black person

that's angry." It is hard to imagine that, if Clinton were white – or possibly any race beside black – he would have felt obliged to justify his contempt with a disclaimer of not trying to sound angry. This is indicative of the heightened severity of policing of racialized expression to which black people are subjected, the very type of scrutiny to which Clinton is alluding in the above excerpt from his interview. It is no surprise, then, that when Clinton got to Hamilton High School, he etched out a place for himself within a group of other black students who were similarly challenging the racializing currents of society, and doing so with attitude, confidence and authority. It is fitting to note that this group of students coalesced around subversive styles of dress, a geographic monument known as the Liberty Tree, and, of course, music. As Clinton notes:

Clinton: So, when I went to Hamilton. I was in 10th grade, I walk in there. I kind of stop, look at the yard. I'm like lookin' around, man...I'm kind of, you know, discovering a lot of stuff. I'm just curious about everything. And I look around, I'm like, "those brothers over there. I'm gonna hang out with those brothers. Those are some wild looking brothers over there." One guy had spiked hair up to here (makes hand gesture above his head). One guy had bondage pants, creepers. They were cool as fuck, man, and they had attitude. It was like, these guys are walking across the yard like they are rock stars. This fucking crew, and they had one white skinhead dude that was hanging out with them or something. One guy already had dreads in '85. I'm like, "What the fuck is going on here?" You know? And so I'm like... Spike Lee's movie hasn't even come out yet. "Do the Right Thing" hasn't even come out yet...All the other brothers are starting to get hip too, and they were starting to taper their pants and wear creepers. That was like a year later though. Here I am just kind of normal nerdy kind of guy. And I remember this man.

Me: And they were all listening to ska?

Clinton: They were listening to a lot of shit. They liked Prince (who Clinton later referred to as the mediator between punk and hip hop). They liked punk rock. They liked ska, you know?...But I remember they were kicking it under the tree at a bench. It was like "How am I going to fuckin' meet these guys?"

I'm like strategizing. I see them walking to school. Fish was in that group, he had a fish earring. Fish from Fishbone (an all black band that blended rock/punk/ funk /reggae/ska and just about every other genre one can think of). I'm like "Hmmm," one day I walked them, beat them to their spot, and I sat down. And then this guy Cedrick, Fish's best friend, goes "Hey man, who is this kid right? Who the fuck are you, man?" I'm like, "I'm Clinton dude." He goes, "You can't sit here man." I'm like, "Well why not?" "This is the Liberty Tree, man. We been kicking it here since 10th grade, man. You can't kick it here, man. We're in 12th grade now. You just can't come in here and kick it. You gotta like earn your spot"...So, I turned around. I had a Dickies (longstanding LA punk band) pin that I got on Melrose. It said "The Dickies." And Fish looked at it and said "Hey man, is that a Dickies pin?" I said, "Yeah, I love the Dickies." He goes, "Sit down. You're part of the Liberty Tree. You're down." I was like "Cool" (Cameron 2014).

For Clinton's crew, then, the schoolyard became a site where they engaged a cross-cultural politics that made use of musical forms and styles of dress to push the limits of blackness, thus refusing to take their naturalized place within the US racial order.

To understand further the social currents that Clinton's group of friends, and Fishbone more generally, were challenging, consider Angelo Moore's (the lead singer of Fishbone) discussion of the difficulty of being black and pushing the boundaries of blackness and racial identity growing up in the virtually all-white suburb of the San Fernando Valley in the 80s:

Going to some of the punk rock gigs and being in the mosh pits was a really good reason to go berserk. You're mad about the racism in the Valley. You're the only black family out here. You got people every once and a while driving by and calling you a nigger. You know? That kind of shit gets to you after a while. When I got hip to slam dancing, oh I was all up in the mosh pit. Trying to expel them demons...I tell a lot of black people, "Y'all need to come see Fishbone man. It's good music. It's funky. It's black music too, and you need to check it out." "We not trying to hear that stringy-haired white boy music," I would get, is the response I would get in return from a lot of black people...It's just frustrating when your own people don't want to come and represent. They don't want to give you props for doing what you're doing (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

While Angelo found an outlet in the punk rock scene to vent his frustration over the racism he encountered due to his outsider status as a black kid in the Valley, Clinton similarly made use of punk to etch out a space of inclusiveness when he was bussed outside of his neighborhood in the magnet school program:

Here I am. I am around these punk rockers. My brother's in college (Clayton Cameron). He's developing his jazz stuff. I abandoned my neighborhood. I mean, most of the festivals fell apart (black music festivals Clinton discussed earlier in the interview that had cohered the black community and black nationalism during the 60s and 70s). I am going, I am being bussed, first to Loyola Marymount elementary school, which is great, and then (Bancroft Junior High) magnet school completely outside of my neighborhood. Different slang, different everything, different music, I just ate it up (Cameron 2014).

It is important to note here Clinton's use of the word "abandoned," for it points to a dissonance felt by Clinton as he was bussed outside of his neighborhood and expanded upon his cultural repertoires in areas such as "music" and "slang." On the one hand, Clinton is intrigued by the new cultural forms he has encountered. As he notes, he "just ate it up." Yet, at the same time, Clinton feels a sense that he has abandoned his neighborhood, and, much like the black musical festivals of the civil rights and black nationalist eras that have since fallen apart, Clinton's sense of abandonment seems to extend to blackness itself. Thus, as Clinton is bussed into neighborhoods and schoolyards filled with unfamiliar cultural forms, he is simultaneously taken by a sense of excitement and a sense that he has betrayed his community in leaving.

This sense of betrayal is exemplary of what Greg Tate refers to as "labor under the burden on representation and keeping it real" (2003:115), a labor to which

white people are not subjected in US society. White folks are not held accountable by their communities, or by society at large, to the task of representing an entire people, and are thus not expected to “labor under the burden” of keeping it real. This is a social psychological phenomenon produced through the US’s legacy of racism and racial segregation, one which typifies the everyday burdens of cultural and emotional labors to which people of color are subjected, and from which white folks are exempt. Within the context of desegregation, white kids inducted into the LAUSD’s bussing program were always already liberated from the burden of mourning and loss produced through this sense of abandonment. Hence, white students did not have to deal with the social psychological fallout resulting from a failure to keep it real, and were thus able to expand upon their senses of community and cultural belonging without being simultaneously stricken with a sense of abandonment of their neighborhood communities. Here, we again see how seamlessly white privilege slipped back into the framework of desegregation – not solely on a macrosociological level via the courts’ definitions of integration and district planning, but also on a social psychological level for students of color who were bussed outside of their neighborhoods to attend desegregated schools. Further applications (and implications) of Tate’s discussion of this sort of social psychological burden of labor will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Clinton continues his discussion of punk rock as a conduit for delving into new forms of cultural expression and community building that he engaged when he was bussed outside of his neighborhood:

My mom...picked me up from Bancroft, she would see these guys with green hair...And my brother saw me saying "Hi"...my brother said "Clinton was saying hi to some kid with green hair," and they were harmless kids, you know? But in the 80's, '83, '84, you know, that was considered, like, you know. People would pick on them, and they were like, you know doing crazy stuff, and now it's like whatever. Nobody even cares...My mom didn't like that, and so...I wanted to go out you know, and I was starting to you know, kind of define, what punk rock was (Cameron 2014).

In this sense, for Angelo and Clinton, punk rock became a cornerstone of identity (trans)formation in worlds and neighborhoods that either outright rejected blackness (as in Angelo's case) or were removed from the familiarity of culture and cultural forms that existed within neighborhood communities (as in Clinton's case).

Furthermore, Clinton addresses the specific role that the LAUSD played in facilitating his engagement with punk rock as he recalls how the first punk gig that he attended was a show sponsored by none other than the LAUSD, "The first punk rock show I remember going to was actually sponsored by the LAUSD on the Santa Monica pier... and I remember they raffled off a set of encyclopedias, seriously. And it was the first time I saw a little friendly mosh pit" (Cameron 2014). Again, it becomes clear how complex and contradictory the social psychological effects of the desegregation effort were, particularly for students of color. On the one hand, being bussed outside of neighborhoods placed a disproportionate burden of emotional labor upon them, while on the other, the desegregation effort afforded an opportunity for youths to engage cultural forms – in this case, punk rock – that facilitated their (trans)formations of self and new senses of cultural belonging.

Angelo Moore and Fishbone would take the zaniness and ethos of non-conformity that defined LA's punk scene to a whole new level, a level which

incorporated black cultural forms, as well as modes of expression that were unprecedented in US popular culture. As Ice-T, an LA-based innovator of early West Coast hip hop, notes:

If nothing else, they're original, you know? They call me the OG, but OG really in LA slang means original. The OG 501 G is the OG Chuck Taylors – the original. An original means is before that, there was none. So they're definitely original. There was no pre-Fishbone. It was just them. So, you know, they get to wear that crown to the grave (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

Clinton expands upon the unprecedented quality of Fishbone's music:

Yeah, So I went up to Cedrick, and I go "Hey man, what do you know about this band Fishbone? They sound pretty hip," and I'm kind of pissed. I want to do stuff like this. Bad Manners sped up, funky...I was like, wouldn't it be a trip if you actually had the funk in the punk, but the ska too. No one's really doing that. It's like I love all the ska stuff, but they're afraid to get funky. It's like they're like avoiding it or something. It's like they don't know how or they haven't tried. I go "Why not. Why not be the first?" I'm like "Aww shit." They're (Fishbone) the first (laughs). And so, I'm thinking, that's gonna change everything. And in a sense, it did...(Clinton 2014).

The cultural innovation engaged by punk rock generally, and Fishbone more specifically, gave Clinton a sort of cultural vocabulary to embrace blackness in a unique way, while simultaneously resisting the oppressive forces of racialization that he encountered in his everyday social interactions. As he notes, "I wanted to do what Fishbone was doing. With my twist on it, and that was coming from the hood." It is important here to not overstate the influence that Fishbone had upon Clinton, however, because he was already developing a similar sort of innovative expression well before he had heard of or met any of the members from Fishbone. He recalls:

Clinton: I read in the LA Weekly that this band was like, you know you gotta see this band you know. And when they described them, I was like these muthafuckas are pissing me off. I want to do this. How can these muthafuckas take my idea? I was actually kind of pissed, you know?

Me: You don't remember the band name?

Clinton: Fishbone (laughs). I'm not kidding. I really had that idea before I even heard of them you know (Cameron 2014).

It is interesting to note here that, for Clinton, the desegregated schools, and the social interactions they made possible, operated as sites that simultaneously reinforced *and* denaturalized the ideologies of segregation, myths of racial purity and the heavily policed boundaries of racialized expressions. On the one hand, the schoolyard was a source of racialization (and racism) for Clinton – as we see in the instances when white kids were ridiculing him for not being knowledgeable about hip hop. On the other, however, it was Clinton's entrance into the magnet program that provided him with the interpersonal networks and resulting cultural capital which allowed him to make use of the zaniness of punk rock mixed with Afro-Caribbean and African American musical forms such as ska and funk, in order to engage his unique cultural sensibilities – sensibilities that carved out a genre defying identity (much like his music) which allowed Clinton to transcend stereotypical and “acceptable” modes of black expression without distancing himself from blackness. Again, we see both the emancipatory and the oppressive occurring within the social interactions that contributed to Clinton's (trans)formation of self on the desegregated schoolyards.

In addition to providing Clinton with a group of friends at school, The Liberty Tree crew would become Clinton's gateway to attending his first gigs – gigs that would eventually play a role in compelling Clinton to form his own band, the locally legendary intercultural mash up, Section 8. As Clinton notes:

So anyway, I was like, “I got to check this band out”. And he goes “Your boy Fish is in that band.” “Really?” I go, “Hey Fish, Phillip” cuz I called him Phillip, I didn’t call him Fish back then. I go “Phillip man. You playing this LA street scene?” “Yeah.” So I ask my mom. That was the one thing my mom let me do...It was like going to the most amazing club you ever been to. More bands than you can ever fuckin’ imagine...So I ask Fish, I’m like “Fish what’s up man?”...And he says, “hey man, I live right around the corner from you, so we will all ride together, go down there.” “So what time you want me to meet you?” “Meet me at 10:30 or 10:00” or something like that...So I’m walking around the corner to his house...So I walk and I knock on the door and I go, “Is Fish here?” She (Fish’s mom) said, “Honey, you just missed him. You can probably catch him if you run,” and I see their van go right around the corner. So I ran to the bus stop, got on the bus, took the 33...got off...and got to the stage, and I saw Fish setting up, and I was like, “oh cool,” you know? So uh, fuckin’ had a great time. I was like this band is off the fuckin’ hook...I was like this is some, this is the shit right here, you know...It was just the fact that they like came out like so crazy. So much energy. So then Fish, you know, we get back to high school...All of a sudden, we started really talking about music, you know, me and Fish. Fish liked my drumming (Cameron 2014).

Fish’s mother’s apartment, where Clinton went to meet up with Fish and the others in order to catch a ride to the Street Scene, housed the bedroom where Fishbone formed as a band and honed their chops. Yet, Fishbone, like Clinton’s band Section 8 (which will be discussed further below) was also a product of interpersonal networks established, in part, in the desegregation effort of the LAUSD. Quite literally, Fishbone may never have been were it not for several of the band members being bussed to Hale Junior High School in the San Fernando Valley. As Laurence Fishburne remarks in his narration of the documentary “Everyday Sunshine: The Story of Fishbone:”

With the black community walled off by a growing network of concrete freeways, and educational opportunities worsening for inner city youth, a growing movement called for the integration of the Los Angeles school system. After a ruling by the California Supreme Court, black kids from South Central were bussed to the white suburban Valley. Amid this collision

of cultures and musical influences emerged a band that would change the face of rock and roll (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

John “Norwood” Fisher, the bassist for Fishbone and the brother of Phillip “Fish” Fisher, recalls his first day being bussed to Hale as part of the Permits with Transportation (PWT) program discussed in the previous chapter, “The busses would pull in here (motioning toward the parking lot), park over here. The first day of school, there was parents, off the campus, with some signs that said ‘go home.’ It only lasted a couple of days. But ultimately, most of the kids ended up being cool” (Metzler and Anderson 2010; Moreland 1985).

Norwood continues with a description of meeting Angelo for the first time at Hale Junior High School, “Me and Fish were already playing music together, so in our minds, we was already a band waiting for other members. And then, starting in the ninth grade, there was this new black kid that nobody knew. He was different from all of us in a way ‘cuz he smiled all the time.” Walter “Dirty Walt” Kibby, the trumpeter for Fishbone, explains the significance of Angelo’s smile as a marker of cultural difference:

He (Angelo) is devoid of hood sense, so every time he would come to the hood, they would mess with him. You know, little gangsters were smoking cigarettes, they’d drop a cigarette in his boot. ‘Cuz they thought he was, you know, a little funny. Or they call him Prince ‘cuz he had the little ‘do and all that shit, you know? He’d be smiling all the damn time. You just can’t come to the hood smiling, *all the damn time* (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

It is important to note here that Norwood, Angelo and Dirty Walt call attention to something that was completely ignored by the courts, the court interveners and the interest groups involved in the desegregation effort – intra-racial

cultural differences. A quantitative breakdown of enrollment by race (data acquired by the school district and used as a barometer for successful integration by the courts) does well to take the pulse of racial desegregation, but it does not account for students' exposure to cultural difference, especially intra-racial cultural differences and interracial cultural similarities. I am not attempting to entirely discredit the assumption that racial desegregation creates an environment rich with a diversity of perspectives. Rather, I am calling attention to the fact that, in the US, race often serves as a smokescreen through which intra-racial differences are homogenized, and a diversity of perspectives are reduced to slippery and racist assumptions such as the existence of an "African-American perspective." It is through ideologies such as these that the myth of racial purity is reinforced, the very myth upon which the US's history of racial segregation was justified and premised in the first place. In this sense, the desegregation effort was carried out with some of the same assumptions posed by segregationists decades earlier during the Jim Crow era, particularly the assumption of intra-racial homogeneity, which was premised upon the myth of racial purity. Therefore, Fishbone's story makes clear that when we speak of intercultural music scenes and expanding upon notions of community boundaries and cultural belonging, we are speaking of a process that can and does occur both intra- and inter-racially. In the case of Angelo's introduction to the other would-be members of Fishbone, we are confronted with cultural differences produced at the intersection of race, neighborhood and class, as Angelo's middle class status afforded his family the

financial means to purchase a home in the Woodland Hills neighborhood of the San Fernando Valley.

Angelo comments further on the role of the desegregation effort in the formation of Fishbone:

I was out here with the white people and the green lawns, and quiet. I wanted to be hip. They were the black guys. I'm like, "oh shit, some black people. Let me talk to 'em and see if they like the same thing I like."...I had a pretty good childhood out here man, but uh, I still wanted to be around people of color, and flavor, and culture and stuff like that, so, you know, I was compelled to get on the bus and ride out to where Norwood was (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

This notion of white people as flavorless, cultureless, and indeed, colorless, may seem to be a racist accusation implying a sort of absence of nearly everything of substance within the white community. Angelo's remarks here are reminiscent of DeAngelo Stearnes statement wherein he charges that, through white appropriation, "...black musical innovation (has been) co-opted, *diluted* (by whites) (my emphasis)" (Vincent 1996: 20). Such assertions form the impression that whites are not only devoid of substance, but they also squeeze or "dilute" the substance from those cultural forms they coopt. Ironically, however, the notion of the absence of substance within the white community was propagated through the "invisibility of whiteness" – an ideological construct that has historically been mobilized to uphold systemic white supremacy. US nomenclature uses racial designations for cultural descriptions of all racial groups except white. In these terms, black culture is "black culture", while white culture is simply "culture," or whiteness stakes a vast claim over national identity with the employment of the term "American culture." Whites are the norm

against which difference is measured. In this sense, whiteness, much like white supremacy, has a tendency to remain invisible in the US, and the term white supremacy (even as it pervades every aspect of public and private life in the US) is often reserved for extreme groups invested in white racism and racial terror such as the Klu Klux Klan and the Aryan Nation. Whiteness is not invisible; it is everywhere, so much so that we don't even mention it. It goes unlabeled.

The 1980s were fertile ground for the promotion of the invisibility of whiteness, as the rise of colorblindness and colorblind ideology extended its reach to the realm of popular culture. The creation of Music Television (MTV) provides a prime example of the way in which colorblind ideology of the 1980s and legacies of white supremacy, specifically racist Reagan-era backlash politics, were expressed through the racial logic of the marketing of popular music during this era. During the formative years for the cable network, MTV, with few exceptions (i.e. crossover acts such as Lionel Richie and Michael Jackson), offered an all-white lineup of musicians and bands. As David Bowie notes in a 1983 interview with Mark Goodman, Video Jockey (VJ) for MTV from 1981-1987, "It occurred to me, having watched MTV over the last few months, that um, it's a solid enterprise, it's got a lot going for it, I'm just fraught by the fact that...there are so few black artists featured on it" (Greene 2016). The exclusion of black musicians from the lineup of artists featured on MTV, as well as the general dearth of television targeting black audiences in the late 70s and early 80s, prompted the establishment of Black Entertainment Television (BET) as an outlet for the representation of black cultural forms (and black people) on cable

television (Watson 2016). In all fairness, MTV should have been called White Music Television. Again, we see racial designations used for non-white cultural forms and cable networks while the white music cable network takes on the non-racially charged label of mere “music television.” This is why Angelo refers to other students of color as the source of culture and flavor. Not because white people are devoid of culture, or flavor for that matter. Indeed, the “green lawns,” the “white people,” the “quiet,” and yes, even the people who drove by calling him the n-word from time to time, were all facets of the San Fernando Valley’s white culture, but these elements of white racialized culture were buried beneath a façade of colorblindness, and colorblindness is a void which effortlessly privileges whiteness through absence.

In this sense, far from merely being some expression of black racism, Angelo’s assertion that white people are cultureless, flavorless, and colorless is rather a reification of an ideology used to propagate the invisibility of whiteness. Angelo is thus unwittingly upholding an ideological means through which white supremacy was maintained during the 1980s. With that said, we are witnessing a sort of contradictory ideological imposition through Angelo’s assertion. That is, as Angelo engages a powerful form of black empowerment by claiming the areas of “culture” and “flavor” for blackness, he is simultaneously buying into the logic of whiteness as the norm – a logic that only names racialized deviations from this norm as sources of flavor and culture. In this sense, Angelo is exposing a complex and contradictory formation within the historical matrix of white and black intercultural exchange in US society as he asserts black empowerment through an ideological construct that holds white

people as flavorless, cultureless, colorless, and ultimately, invisible – the very ideological construct upon which white supremacy was facilitated during the 1980s via Reagan era backlash politics that were used to roll back the gains of the civil rights movement through “colorblind” legislation.

Additionally, as Angelo seeks out other black people to befriend on the schoolyard, we see something similar to Ulises’ assertion in the previous chapter of “you go with what you know.” Just as Angelo remarks, “Oh shit, some black people. Let me talk to ‘em and see if they like the same thing I like,” Ulises had a similar experience at his first magnet school when he described meeting his friend Mario, “That’s where I met Mario, dude. And why? ‘Cuz he was like the only other brown kid in the class. And we just were like, let’s-be-homies-kind-of-shit. Which is that initial, kind of like, you go with what you know, right?...Like ‘OK, those kids look like me, I’m going over there.” In overwhelmingly white settings (ones fraught with overt racism in Angelo’s case), the tendency for Angelo and Ulises was to stick with people of their own race. This is not surprising when one considers the white parents holding the “go home” signs as black children arrived on busses to Hale Junior High School in Angelo’s neighborhood – not exactly a welcoming environment for an experiment in intercultural democratization and interracial alliance formation.

The story of Fishbone’s formation, then, embodies the contradictions of the desegregation effort. On the one hand, the racism they encountered, and the sociohistorical processes that had naturalized racial segregation as an institution and an ideology, had caused the members of Fishbone to stick together as black students

on an overwhelmingly white schoolyard, thus reifying the perceived naturalness of racial separatism. At the same time, the context of the desegregation effort at Hale Junior High School had an integrative effect as the members of Fishbone were exposed to different forms of music on the nearly all-white schoolyard. As Clinton notes in his discussion about Fishbone,

Angelo was not bussed out to the Valley. Angelo was from the Valley. He had to bus back here...Fish was bussed to the Valley, you know? And Norwood I think was bussed to the Valley...I know that junior high school years, that's where like Fish kind of got bussed to the valley, and he started getting into different types of music, you know (Cameron 2014)?

Chris Dowd, trombonist and keyboardist for Fishbone, also draws attention to how some of his musical tastes were more similar to kids he met in the Valley than those of the people from his own neighborhood, "This neighborhood (where Fish, Norwood, Chris Dowd and Dirty Walt lived, referred to in the documentary as South Central, but actually situated in Mid City near the Culver City border – a problematic misnomer loaded with racialized assumptions and racist misrepresentations) is entirely a black neighborhood. And Kendall (guitarist for Fishbone) and I, you know, we loved the punk stuff as much as the kids in the Valley, and so we became each other's musical allies" (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

Ulises, from Ozomatli, had a similar experience as he was exposed to new cultural forms when he left his neighborhood on the school bus. As he notes:

Ulises: And interestingly enough, being that I'm so far out this way (East and South), of course, my bus went through the hood, so all of a sudden, I had a gang of black homies. Dude, that shit would have never flown (in my neighborhood). There were no black kids around here. On the school bus was nothing but black and brown kids, on my bus.

Me: So you would have met no black kids if you hadn't taken that bus?

Ulises: Oh no. I mean, yeah, you would've, but not in the same capacity. We were with them every day. We were hanging out. You're sharing music... Oh yeah, all of a sudden, it's like, that connection was huge at the time 'cuz I remember exactly that... The two tapes that were played like the most on the bus was, what, at the time, what? Raising Hell (Run D.M.C), License to Ill (Beastie Boys). What was it? LL Cool J, all that shit.

Me: That was on KDAY though, right?

Ulises: Dude, our bus driver used to let us take the fuckin' boom box, which was the shit (Bella 2014).

Again, we can see the contradictions that defined the desegregation effort here, as Ulises, who sought out other “brown” people to befriend on the schoolyard because they looked like him, also took advantage of the integrated setting of the school bus to establish friendships with “a gang of black homies,” and to expand upon his musical tastes by “sharing music” with them. Ulises' encounters with new cultures, on the one hand, and new cultural forms on the other, cannot be teased apart, for it was music that provided a catalyst for the intercultural alliances he made with his “black homies” on the bus. As he notes about sharing tapes on the bus, “that connection was huge at the time.” And the opportunity to engage this musical connection was made possible through a state-sanctioned desegregation effort that put black and brown youths on the same bus to and from school each day.

Similarly, Javier Mosley from Sleepless Music Group, J. Mosley and Proper Grounds describes his experience of getting hip to new forms of music on the desegregated schoolyard, and exposing white kids from the Westside to new musical forms as well:

Javier: And that was like the era... The 90s were my 70s, and that's what I'm saying... And we were ALL KIDS! Dude, KIDS!... That's when we were just bridging... And that was right after the riots too, right around '92 man. And that's when Proper Grounds (black heavy rock/ hip hop band that Javier played guitar for in the 90's) released their record

Me: Do you think that if you hadn't have gone to LACES, were you and your brother (who also went to LACES) some of the few people in your neighborhood listening to that heavy stuff?

Javier: We were the only one's listening to that.

Me: And you attribute that to LACES?

Javier: Yes, yeah. Cuz we had a lot of folks from the Westside. Suicidal Tendencies came from Venice. Right? And you know, you go to school with these cats that are bussed in from the Westside, and we were like "damn, that's hot." And so we were bringing a little something to them. We'd be like "check this out"... and I don't know if you are ever going to ask me if LACES... if the magnet program was a big part of where I am now? Absolutely, man. I think it was the biggest part, because that's when the worlds opened up for me, dude (Mosley 2014).

Clinton also credits the desegregated schoolyards as not only one of his points of entry into the LA music scene, but also as one of the sites that facilitated the establishment of the intercultural interpersonal networks that account for the formation of his band, Section 8. As he notes:

Well it's funny. If you think about it, Current State (Section 8's first name) was like Dave Derusha, Jewish kid, very hip. Very cool kid who went to Hamilton... as it was a magnet. I graduated before (it was a music magnet, but it already housed a humanities magnet). I'm older than him... Cerritos also went there... I think Hector even went there, I think that's how we got Hector in the band... Asdru went there (later, Asdru joined Ozomatli). Asdru was a Hispanic kid. Music just has a tendency to do that, just like attract (Cameron 2014).

When we consider that Clinton is, admittedly, not a fan of state-sanctioned desegregation efforts (remember his assertion in the previous chapter, "You know, I

don't think that forced integration idea was all that great"), yet his band was formed within this sociohistorical context, we get a sense of just how multi-layered, and at times dissonant, the experiences were for those young people whose selves were (trans)formed during this era. Clinton, Angelo, Chris Dowd, Norwood, Dirty Walt, Ulises and Javier's stories, then, are indicative of how, taken together (and in some instances, taken individually), the experiences of students inducted into the desegregation effort were contradictory as they both reinforced *and* denaturalized the social currents of segregation and white supremacy. A trend we see with some consistency, however, is a tendency for music to play a role in those experiences that were integrative. This is to say that, within the often volatile context of desegregation, music consistently served as a catalyst – or what Joey Derusha refers to as that “something highlighting the beneficial connections between diverse elements” – for the facilitation of intercultural exchange, the construction of a cross-cultural politics, and interracial alliance formation. As Clinton notes above, “Music just has a tendency to do that, just like attract.”

Devon Jackson-Kali further establishes this power of music to coalesce diverse groups of people as he notes:

That's the wonderful thing about music, you know? Everybody can do it. For me, it was that equalizer. It was that thing that took away any divisions among people...Because of music, I knew that everybody's the same. I knew that everybody had a way to be approached and touched. Just because that person comes from a different culture doesn't mean we don't have something in common. If we have music in common, we have to have something else in common, you know? And obviously, we all do. But that's what music taught me (Jackson-Kali 2014).

It is important to pause here in order to take note of Devon's use of the term "obviously." In the previous chapter, Ulises used the terms "obviously" and "definitely" in reference to the ways in which students on desegregated schoolyards formed segregated cliques that used race as a coalescing factor. As he noted, "but then I do remember, there was obviously, definitely cliques that were based on race..." Here, however, Devon employs the term "obviously" in reference to the existence of similarities that reached across racial differences. Again, we get a sense of the way in which desegregated schoolyards posed a contradictory ideological construct upon the racial logic of the time as they became sites that simultaneously reinforced and denaturalized the social currents of segregation and racial separatism. On the one hand, for Ulises, racialized cliques were an "obvious" and "definite" formation on the schoolyards. On the other, Devon signals the potential for a (trans)formation in the racial logic that occurred for some on the desegregated schoolyards as commonalities among students of different races were assumed to exist, were taken as a given, and were thus "obvious." In this sense, the desegregated schoolyards became sites that performed the cultural work of denaturalizing racial separatism. And importantly, for Devon, it was music that facilitated this denaturalization of the rigidity of racial separatism and allowed him to (trans)form the racial logic of post-civil rights Los Angeles with the ideological modifier of "obvious" cross-cultural similarities.

When Devon started his own band in his senior year of high school, he put together a 13-piece band called Product of Stone. Once again, this band was an intercultural ensemble pieced together on a magnet schoolyard. As he notes

Devon: So then I went to Hamilton...I got put in orchestra, but I tell ya' I wanted to be in jazz band...but I still was pretty serious, 'cuz I practiced every day, and I still wound up starting my own band. My band was called Product of Stone after Sly and the Family Stone, and uh, you know, we had like a 13-piece band.

Me: Who was in that band?

Devon: Ernie Munoz (from Hamilton), Cerrito (also from Hamilton, would become horn player for Section 8 as well), ummm...Ben Kashaba (from Hamilton)...that band we did my last, my senior year (Jackson-Kali 2014).

Product of Stone not only embodied the reality of desegregation with its multicultural makeup (the band was a combination of black, brown, mixed race, white and Asian kids), but, as Devon notes, the very name of the band paid homage to Sly and the Family Stone, a multi-racial, multi-gender band from the 60s that would use popular music as a site to usher in what would later become the desegregation era's ethos of celebrating diversity and multiculturalism. As Lonnie Marshall, a local legend and the bassist/singer for the band Weapon of Choice, notes:

Well to take up where we left off before you started recording, you said, it's about multicultural desegregation period and how music affects the people and how people affect the music, and the first thing I thought of was Sly and the Family Stone, and that was a big impression on me, you know? His music and his approach, his lyric approach and um, it was so, you know, thoughtful that kids could understand it, and it was, you know, it wasn't corny either...Intellectual people like got something from it too, and I related to that, and he had a multicultural band, so he was like, he embodied that whole concept and made it easy for people to embrace that thing all together. He really broke it through on a whole level...bigger than just the music business. He shifted the paradigm with his band (Marshall 2014).

In putting forth this paradigm shift, Sly and the Family Stone used funk and other black cultural forms to help lay the groundwork for denaturalizing racial segregation, and normalizing the existence of multiracial bands. As Lonnie remarks:

DW: Correct me if I'm wrong, but the way we grew up, we would see multiracial bands all the time, you know? And that, from Sly to the 80s and 90s, I mean it changed the whole mix, right? It created a new possibility, right?

Lonnie: Uh huh. Absolutely. You would see it everywhere. It (multiracial bands) was normal. And it wasn't normal before that (Marshall 2014).

In 1967, Sly and the Family Stone dropped their first album, fittingly titled, "A Whole New Thing." With this album, the band introduced a new breed of funk, far different from the choppy, syncopated meditations on two or three chords developed by the James Brown band. Considering that Sly and the Family Stone took the stage with a multi-racial, multi-gender lineup at a time when the record industry and the bands it produced were highly segregated, the title of their first album serves as a double entendre. Not only was Sly and the Family's Stone's music unprecedented (or what Ice T would refer to as the OG 501 Chuck Taylor G), but a band integrated along racial and gender lines in the early 60s was indeed A Whole New Thing. Yet, as Lonnie notes above, within twenty years of the release of this album, what was once the spectacle of the integrated band had become normalized to some extent in LA's music scene, and the segregation propagated by the industry had thus begun to become unstable. In this sense, the impact of Sly and the Family Stone's ethos of unity that was first put forth in the form of "A Whole New Thing" cannot be overstated. It began a process of denaturalizing segregation within musical

practices and performance in US popular music. Much like the first desegregated schoolyards of the late 1970s, where youths from segregated neighborhoods began to spend their days with other kids from all over the city, Sly and the Family Stone cracked open a door. And, although this is a door that waivers on its hinge until the present, Sly and the Family Stone's music, like those campuses that were able to successfully integrate, offered a new way of experiencing community, cultural sameness and difference, and thus, social psychological (trans)formations of the self. Indeed, what was at stake was a chance to make good on the possibility to engage "A Whole New Thing."

All that Is Solid Melts into Sound: Intercultural Music Scenes in Desegregation Era Los Angeles

When we were listening to Fishbone, and Ozomatli, Section 8, all these different things that were happening around Los Angeles, they were an integrative. They were all these different cultures coming together, making something that was greater that attracted all different kinds of people, and we all got together and danced, and it was a great scene...When you really find the connections between these different cultural influences and highlight it, you create something...They hear something they recognize so they don't feel uncomfortable, but they also hear something else that is in somebody else's experience that is coming together. And I honestly do think that there is something, there is like a relief that, "Hey, maybe this can work. Maybe there is something greater that we're all doing together that we can't do separately."

~Excerpt from Interview with Joey Derusha
Multi-Instrument Musician
Ancestry of Sound, Alef Project and Many Other Projects

As the desegregation era attempted to redress centuries of systemic discrimination sustained by a racial hierarchy that was constructed through racial

segregation and maintained through racial terror, students inducted into the desegregation effort were thrown in the fire so to speak – left to work out centuries of racial antagonisms on the schoolyards. However, music and musical fluency would provide these students with some common ground, a tool in the bag for those who chose to devote their efforts toward diffusing, or at the very least not perpetuating, racial antagonisms. The scenes they created did not mute cultural difference for the sake of creating this unity, however. These scenes made use of the richness of cultural difference within the city to engage this Whole New Thing. And when the school bells rang, these students took their music from the schoolyard to the stage, thus establishing intercultural scenes that took the political project of desegregation from the schoolyards to the stages and dance floors of what would become Los Angeles’ intercultural music scene during the desegregation era.

Peace Pipe, King King, and the Variety Arts Center

It puts everybody in the same space...It’s where diversity blends. Everybody can feel it. Everybody can relate. I mean, what can I say? It just *grooves* (Ehrman 1993: no pg #).

~ Tabala Thomas,

A regular at the weekly intercultural venue “Peace Pipe”

Although my interviewees came from areas as culturally diverse and geographically distant from one another as Boyle Heights, Venice Beach, Bell, South Central, Park La Brea and Silverlake, nearly every one of them attended and performed at the short-lived, yet highly influential, intercultural venue known as Peace Pipe. Not only was this venue well attended by amateur and professional

musicians alike, but it also became a performance space where intercultural ensembles would further solidify their interpersonal networks and performance combos. As Justin Porè, one of the percussionists from Ozomatli, notes of the interpersonal networks out of which Ozomatli emerged:

It was just like people from different circles in LA. Like we kinda knew about each other, well we all knew about each other from different ways. Like my brother went to school with Asdru (at Hamilton High School). Um. I had known about Wil Dog...like there was this whole club called Peace Pipe. It was actually here (In Silverlake, a few blocks from where we sat down for the interview). Yeah, Peace Pipe (Porè 2014).

In a somewhat metaphorical comparison, Lonnie Marshall further places Peace Pipe as a performance space that built upon the social fabrics established on the schoolyard as he notes, “Peace Pipe had a vibe like, like um lunch time at school, you know? When you’re outside on the yard. And, you know...It’s just a exciting time of play and interaction – playful interaction” (Marshall 2014). In this sense, Peace Pipe took the vibe from the schoolyard and transplanted it beyond the boundaries established by wire mesh gates and brick walls. To understand further the way in which Peace Pipe served as an extension of the schoolyard, and was formed by many youths who were high school age, consider Octavio Camacho’s (the founder and promoter of Peace Pipe, and saxophonist for the house band Groovin’ High and Section 8), description of what accounted for the venue’s appeal:

So when you went to Peace Pipe, you saw kids who were 16 years old, you know, and 17 years old along with people who were in their 20s dancing on the dance floor to some music from the 70s that’s being chopped up by the turntables by, you know, by Chemist and...Marvin, right? And at the same time...you’re dancing to a live band...And it was all in the same, in the course of the same space, the same moment...And you know, to me, that

youthfulness, those 16 year olds that were there, that were dancing, that's the reason why that club was cool.

This idea of Peace Pipe as an extension of the schoolyard becomes even more evident when we consider that the house band for Peace Pipe was named Groovin' High, a name borrowed from a song composed by Bebop trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie. The band's name offered an obvious double entendre as well, which, on the one hand, suggested that Peace Pipe was a space where youths would come together to groove while getting high, and on the other, equated Peace Pipe, quite literally, to a schoolyard, as in Groovin' High (School) – a high school dedicated to the Groove.

There is no irony here, nor is it a stretch to make the leap from the interpersonal networks established on the schoolyard to those social fabrics that became further interwoven at Peace Pipe. After all, Octavio established the interpersonal networks – or social fabrics – that would lead to the founding of Peace Pipe on a desegregated magnet schoolyard several years prior during his attendance at Hollywood High School's Performing Arts Magnet in the mid 80s. In addition, Octavio's story takes us on something of a walking tour through several venues that housed the intercultural music scenes in Los Angeles during the desegregation era.

Octavio's journey to becoming the founder of Peace Pipe began one summer shortly after he had graduated from Hollywood High when he was working as a disgruntled employee at Carl's Jr. As he recounts, "I was working at Carl's Junior for the summer. And I was like, 'I gotta get out of here'...I worked all week, 40 hours, and my check was like \$120. And I was like, 'Aww man, this is not working me'"

(Camacho 2014). Octavio would eventually escape the dead-end employment of McJobs by joining the ranks of the grip and sound labor force of the local music scene in Los Angeles. He was able to establish himself in this line of work through the help of a friend with whom he had attended Hollywood High:

So my friend Terry, who I went to high school with, he's like, "yo man," you know? "I got a job, come over here and help me, come work with me." He was working at the Variety Arts Center doing lighting and sound and theater and load ins and everything...And I was like, "really, you make that much money doing that?" 'Cuz I was making three, he was making ten dollars an hour (Camacho 2014).

Not only did Hollywood High School afford Octavio the opportunity to establish interpersonal networks that would provide a gateway to employment within LA's music scene, but the curriculum of the Performing Arts Magnet at Hollywood High School also provided him the opportunity to apply his talents toward gaining skills and learning a trade that would allow him to excel, and get paid, within musical performance spaces in the city. As he recounts:

And I was like, "Man...what do you do?" He was like, "All the same stuff we did in high school, you know like in stage design. All the same stuff we did in high school I am getting paid for," and I was like, "What?????" ...We were in play production... 'Cuz we were in the Performing Arts Magnet School at Hollywood (High)...In addition to play production, you had to take one of the production classes...In addition to that, you had to take these four classes every like 10 weeks, right? Throughout the year...so everybody in the school got to experience at least ten weeks of technical theater...That was enough for me to say, "Oh this is cool. I am kind of a natural at this 'cuz I am kind of like mechanically inclined"...Terry was in that same program...and he was basically saying, "What we used to do in high school, that's what I am getting paid for" (Camacho 2014).

From here, Octavio was able to begin networking with bigger wigs in LA's local music scene such as Brendan Mullen, who many consider to be responsible for

coalescing the bands and audiences that would lay the groundwork for the flourishing Los Angeles punk scene through the establishment of his club The Masque in the late 70s. As Flea, the bassist for the Red Hot Chili Peppers, remarks in this excerpt from his two-page eulogy in the *Los Angeles Times* following Mullen's death:

We were so proud and excited when he liked it (Red Hot Chili Pepper's music) and booked us to open for Bad Brains (Rastafarian punk band). It was a huge step for us to get that gig, but in a much more important way, I felt profoundly validated to be accepted and acknowledged by Brendan Mullen, who was a crucial part -- a hub -- of a scene that for me had mythological status... When Brendan started the Masque, it was a pure act, creating a place for people he liked to do their thing, have fun and get wild, no salesmen allowed. It became a nucleus for a thrilling new music environment that gave birth to the Southern California punk rock music scene, which later gave birth to some of the most important rock music to ever come out of California: X, Black Flag, Los Lobos and then later, the Minutemen, Jane's Addiction and the (humbly I say) Red Hots. He also played drums for Hal Negro and the Satin Tones. It was an exciting cross-cultural punk scene that embraced all races, genders, sexual orientations and any manner of deviant. It was beautiful (2009).

Through Brendan Mullen, Octavio made several connections with other local pioneers of LA's intercultural music scene, such as Willie McNeal from the Solsonics, a band best known for their album "jazz in the Present Tense" that composed music described by a 1994 jazz review in the *Los Angeles Times* as "Blues, rock, reggae and rap all swirl(ed) into their jazz y mix," and Joey Altruda, a stylistically diverse upright bassist who played with Don "Sugarcane" Harris in the intercultural ensemble Tupelo Chain Sex, what Octavio describes as a sort of jazz - punk mash up, and Jump With Joey, a Los Angeles bred internationally famous ska band that, along with Hepcat and Ocean 11, helped establish the third wave ska scene in Los Angeles during the 80s (Joey Altruda 2016; Kohlhasse 1994; Thomas 2013;

WillieMcNeilMusic 2016). In addition, Octavio made use of this scene to befriend and begin networking with the likes of Skate Mater Tate, (an LA born and bred professional skateboarder, TV personality, punk rock DJ, and co-founder of LA's Skate scene), as well as Fishbone. Octavio maps his entrance into this network of intercultural musicians and artists as follows:

So I got a job with him (Terry, Octavio's friend from Hollywood High School) working at the Variety Arts Center...this all connects because that's where I met Brendon Mullen...He used to book the Variety Arts Center, he used to book the Club Lingerie. He was the same guy who was in the X movie cuz he had booked X. He had started the punk rock scene in LA... I met Brendan Mullen in like 1987... my link to everything in LA because Brendon Mullen introduced me to Joey Altruda...Willie McNeal. He introduced me to Skate Master Tate. He was the person that was like the link...He knew everyone, Fishbone, all those guys... He would get acts, right?...He would say..."You gotta come check out this band at Club Lingerie, Tupelo Chain Sex." "Tupelo Chain Sex, What the hell is that?" "Yeah this guy Joey Altruda," he says, "he plays Punk Jazz Guitar." I was like, "WHAT? Punk Jazz Guitar" (Camacho 2014)?

It was through establishing connections with this innovative core of intercultural musicians, artists, promoters, club owners and bookers that Octavio would begin working as a sound man at the King King, a club that housed the weekly event Smokey Hose, which would come to serve as something of a precursor to Peace Pipe. As Octavio recalls, "So he (Brendan Mullen) would invite me to see all these guys... Eventually, that's how I ended up at the King King with Joey Altruda...being the sound man" (Camacho 2014). In addition, the money Octavio was able to save while he was working within this scene allowed him to purchase his first Saxophone. "That's also how I was able to pay for my first sax," Octavio recalls (2014).

The importance of Octavio's work at the King King to the establishment of Peace Pipe a few years later cannot be overstated. The loose structure of the performances at Peace Pipe, particularly the improvised seamless trade-offs between DJ and live band, were based upon performances at Smokey Hose, a weekly event at the King King. Lonnie Marshall, bassist for the house band of Smokey Hose, recalls this improvised practice at the King King:

I played in this band, it was the house band for Smokey Hose, which was a happening club in Hollywood, you know, on 6th and La Brea. It was King King, you know? Which King King is still happening. It's on Hollywood Blvd now, but it used to be on 6th and La Brea, Chinese restaurant, and uh the club was Smokey Hose, and it was a happening spot. And so, I played in the house band with Zander (presumably Zander Schloss from the Circle Jerks, but I did not probe him about his) and Willie McNeal, and we used to play along with whatever the DJ was playing and the people were dancing to, and the DJ would stop and the band would keep playing, and you know, we'd go back and forth. It was mostly improv (Marshall 2014).

In addition to King King, Octavio gives credit to a dance club at the Variety Arts Center called Red Square for further establishing the precedent for the band-and-DJ-beat-matching that would become a staple of the performances at Peace Pipe, and for helping him establish the interpersonal network that would lead to the founding of Peace Pipe. As he recalls:

Me: So who all put this thing (Peace Pipe), who all put it together?

Octavio: It was me, basically. I'm the one who made the phone calls. I knew all the guys from the King King through Joey Altruda. I called Joey. I called Skate Master Tate. I called Willie (McNeil). I called Lonnie Marshall and Ariq Marshall (Lonnie's brother who would eventually become the guitarist for the Red Hot Chili Peppers), umm that I also (in addition to King King) met at the Variety Arts Center... There used to be a dance club there called Red Square. Umm, and it was Matt Dyke from Delicious Vinyl did a dance club there... called Red Square... and Lonnie, and Ariq and Fish from Fishbone would come in and play in between, uh, the dance club. Like they

would...a little bit play off the record. It was not as organized, umm, but you know, Lonnie and Ariq and then Fish, it was always good. And they had a band called Marshall Law, which was basically them three. So I knew Lonnie and Ariq, so I invited them over. The guys from Fishbone, I met them through, you know...from Lonnie.

Me: These are some of the first Peace Pipe shows?

Octavio: These are some of the first, you know? I'd say, "Hey, come on down" (Camacho 2014).

At this point in the interview, Octavio demonstrates how he continually pulled from the interpersonal networks that he had established in the magnet schools as he pieced together the musicians who would deliver the Peace Pipe performances:

Octavio: And then I called...Marvin...I knew since junior high school 'cuz we were locker partners in junior high school...We were both bussed in. I was bussed in from South Los Angeles, I think Marvin lived in Silverlake near King Junior High. It was called Pacoima Junior High Television, Theater and Fine Arts Magnet School (Camacho 2014; Camacho 2016).

Me: Marvin who?

Octavio: Marv, Marvin Fowler, DJ Marvski (LA DJ – he and his brother, DJ Mumbles were well established in Leimert Park's Project Blowed scene, a hip hop scene that was the Mecca for underground LA hip hop in the early 90s), so he was the main DJ at Peace Pipe. And so I called him. He's like, "Yeah, let me introduce you to, uh, Lucas (MacFadden, aka Cut Chemist from Jurassic 5 and Ozomatli) and to uhm, and to Wolf (aka Mixmaster Wolf from the Breakestra, a 70s funk cover band that will be discussed in chapter 3). So he introduced me to Lucas and to Wolf...and then Kevin White, Kevin Fitzgerald (aka DJ Organic) was also, he was a filmmaker. He did that movie Freestyle. He would come down, and then Skate Master Tate. And then Joey Altruda. Those were the people who brought records down like the first night of Peace Pipe (Camacho 2014).

Although Peace Pipe would change its name twice, first to Rat Race and later to Sweetback's, it would always be referred to as Peace Pipe by the regulars.

Additionally, it would change its physical location to the Hollywood (off-strip) club

the Gaslight about a year after it was established - a location Octavio recalls making the club more accessible to youths from all over the city due to 24-hour city bus accessibility. As Octavio notes, “We found a place in the middle of Hollywood. You know, that’s accessible for everyone to get to. All the busses ran there. This is before they had the trains in LA...All the busses ran twenty-four hours to get to that club, so it was like, you know, anybody can get there” (Camacho 2014). With this said, Peace Pipe’s ethos, music and attendees would initially find a home in the early 90s at a restaurant called Rodolpho’s in Silverlake. Octavio recalls establishing Peace Pipe in this space:

When we were at Rodolpho’s, we were there every Thursday...There was a guy Rudy at LA City College who played trombone. He owned two restaurants. He owned, uh, that restaurant right on Silverlake (Blvd.). I forget what it was called, and he also owned Rodolpho’s in Silverlake. He owned two bar/restaurants, Mexican bar/restaurants, and that’s how I got into Rodolpho’s because up to that point I was over at the King King. And He’s like, “yeah, come on down, check it out.” And I was like “Ay, this place is cool. Can I do something here?” He’s like, “Sure” (Camacho 2014).

Peace Pipe emerged as a group of musicians and fans who had no prerequisite for group membership except an affinity for music and dance came together to form an intercultural scene that Octavio had founded upon the premise of inclusiveness and groove. As Octavio and Emerson Cardenas (bassist for Groovin’ High and many other projects, and the current director of the music academy at the magnet school Marshall High School in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles on the Silverlake/East Hollywood border) note during a joint interview:

Octavio: Being a part of it (the scene) doesn’t mean just playing an instrument. It could just be showing up and being a fan and liking the

music... We were all, it was all like a circle. Like everybody wanted to come into this, this circle where they're were no, we didn't have any leaders...

Me: What held the circle together?

Emerson: The music.

Octavio: The music... and that we had a place to meet

Emerson: A place to play

Octavio: A place to meet once a week (Camacho 2014; Cardenas 2014).

In this sense, the formation of Peace Pipe was a process wherein groups of youths came together once a week in a physical space dedicated to the absence of hierarchy and the breaking down of divisions, such as the those between musicians and fans – divisions that far too often define musical scenes. Considering that the process of racial formation in the United States has, since its inception, been one of establishing and maintaining a hierarchy of power and privilege for an elite class of European-Americans, Peace Pipe, and performance spaces like it during desegregation era Los Angeles, engaged a practice of deconstructing those hierarchies on a social psychological – or microsociological – level. As Octavio notes, “Like everybody wanted to come into this, this circle where they're were no, we didn't have any leaders.” And once again, music would be the shared practice in these physical spaces.

Peace Pipe was a culmination of, and thus epitomized, a broader network of intercultural venues in Los Angeles that made use of improvisation and groove to provide a catalyst for the coalescing of the intercultural scenes they housed. As previously mentioned, the format of the seamless band/DJ tradeoff used for

performances at the weekly club and jam session Smokey Hose (King King) and the dance club Red Square (Variety Arts Center) would form the framework for the structure – albeit a loose one – at Peace Pipe. Octavio recalls what a typical show at Peace Pipe would comprise, and why the format of these performances played a role in the event’s success:

One of the things that we were doing right was we had come up with this format. (Looks to Emerson Cardenas) I don’t know if you remember the format we came up with (he says to Emerson) where we had, we never let the jam go longer than fifteen minutes...and we had it scheduled out where it was like 40 minutes of DJing and fifteen minutes of jam...and we always seamed them together, so we’d play along with the record, and then they’d take the record out, and then the people’d be like, “Oh, I thought we were dancing along to the record. Oh wow,” you know? “We’re dancing to a live band.” And, you know, the band would go off and do their improvisation thing, and then the record would mix back in...with the music, and then...each of the musicians would pull out one at a time, and then to the point where it was just back to the records...It worked so well that people half of the time didn’t know if they were dancing to the record or they were dancing to a live band. You know, they were like, “I was dancing to a record, I looked up and now we’re dancing to a live band.” You know? They’d tell me these stories...That’s one of the reasons why it worked so well (Camacho 2014).

It is important to note that, while making use of improvisation as a catalyst to unite youths from a multitude of neighborhoods and backgrounds under one groove, venues such as Smokey Hose, Red Square, Rat Race, Sweetback’s and Peace Pipe situate themselves within what Fischlin and Heble (inspired by Sun Ra) describe as “The Other Side of Nowhere,” a “metaphor for the alternative sound-world of improvised music making, and perhaps more notably, for the new kinds of social relationships articulated in a music that, while seeming to come out of nowhere, has profoundly gifted us with the capacity to edge beyond the limits of certainty, predictability, and orthodoxy” (2004:1). Indeed, while these youths danced to the

often improvised hybrid grooves of funk, rock, jazz, punk, hip hop, cumbia, ska, banda, reggae and a wealth of other musical forms laid down by bands such as Groovin' High, Section 8, Marshall Law, Product of Stone, Weapon of Choice, Fishbone, and Ozomatli, and DJs spun records by bands such as Sly and the Family Stone, Parliament/Funkadelic, Freddie Hubbard, Gary Bartz, and Brass Construction, sometimes overlaid with the poetry of William S. Burroughs, various other Beatniks, Mikah 9 and other local spoken word artists, they were pushing the boundaries of musical scenes, industries, social networks, communities and neighborhoods that had been formed and constrained through the historical realities of racial segregation (Bella 2014; Camacho 2014; Cameron 2014; Derusha 2013; Ehrman 1993; Marshall 2014; Porè 2014; Thomas 2013). In so doing, these performance spaces offered youths "A Whole New Thing" (Sly and the Family Stone 1967) – the opportunity to engage new forms of intercultural social interactions.

Exemplary of C. Wright Mills' investigations into the intersections between biography and history, these new forms of social interactions functioned on a social psychological, or microsociological, level, yet performed the cultural work of destabilizing the macrosociological phenomena that had erected the institution and ideology of racial segregation. In Fischlin and Heble's terms, these youths made use of intercultural grooves in intercultural spaces to "edge beyond the limits of certainty, predictability, and orthodoxy" (2004:1) – limits that all too often seem to command identity (trans)formations with an intractable force of racialization driven by the historical fallout from the racial terror upon which the US was built. By exposing and

exploiting this inherent malleability in the social construction of race, these spaces, and the people and music that emanated from within them, offered the potential for a ray of warmth to usher in the dawning of spring, thus disrupting the seemingly terminal “Winter in America” (Scott-Heron 1974). The snowpack is just water. *All that is solid melts into sound...*

Chapter III

“Oh, He Can Play? Well Who Gives a Fuck What He Is?”: Subversive Colorblindness as a Counter to White Supremacy

The previous chapter explored how musicians who forged intercultural, interpersonal networks in the LAUSD’s desegregated schools drew upon these networks as they made their way from the schoolyard to the stage, thus coalescing a diverse group of young people into musical scenes that took the political project of desegregation beyond the confines of the schoolyards. In so doing, they further denaturalized the institution and ideology of segregation through musical forms and intercultural engagements that provided a counter to white supremacy and the racial antagonisms that continued to divide the city along racial lines.

This chapter aims to unpack the ideological currents that (trans)formed on the desegregated schoolyards and became operative within these scenes. Specifically, this chapter offers an interrogation of two vastly different forms of colorblind ideology. In 1963, in what has become an iconic pronouncement of the civil rights era, Martin Luther King, jr. put forth his dream of a society wherein his four children would “not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” During the 1980s, neoconservatives and neoliberals appropriated and rearticulated this rhetoric to cloak in racial neutrality a strain of backlash politics geared toward dismantling the political and ideological gains made during the Civil Rights

Movement. Toward this end, they strategically ignored the part of MLK's speech charging that, "America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked 'insufficient funds.'" Instead, they made whites out to be the victims of a sort of "reverse discrimination" perpetuated by the left through policies meant to redress centuries of systemic racism such as affirmative action and various social programs designed specifically for groups of color. This appropriation and rearticulation of civil rights rhetoric thus served to perpetuate white supremacy and gave rise to a colorblind racism that I will refer to here as "mainstream colorblindness." However, as youths who were inducted into the desegregation era came of age in settings marked by interculturality, some of them began to engage a different form of colorblindness, one which similarly decentralized race in its structure, but did so with the effect of challenging the very structures of white supremacy that mainstream colorblindness sought to uphold. In so doing, these youths engaged what I refer to as "subversive colorblindness," and they did so almost intuitively, because they had come of age in intercultural, interpersonal networks that had begun to denaturalize the institution and ideology of racial segregation.

This chapter begins with a discussion of how white neighborhoods that continued to be highly segregated nurtured ideological currents of mainstream colorblindness and cultural practices of white appropriation that continued to propagate white supremacy throughout the desegregation era, even when musical forms and practices derived from these neighborhoods crossed over into intercultural scenes. I will then explore how others involved in intercultural bands and scenes

during the desegregation era engaged ideological currents that proved more subversive, and how these currents allowed such intercultural engagements to denaturalize racial separatism on social psychological, and at times microeconomical, levels. By placing these youths' racialized understandings of themselves and each other within the broader backdrop of the mainstream colorblind ideology that came to dominate the 80s and 90s both ideologically and politically, this chapter will demonstrate how these youths began to engage a more subversive colorblindness as they cultivated new and egalitarian ways of engaging cultural difference with a seemingly intuitive and creative effortlessness.

Popular Music, Segregated Social Fabrics and White Supremacy

It is important to return here to Clinton Cameron's (founder, percussionist and drummer of Section 8, and many other projects) notion of "social fabrics," (presented in chapter 1) for this concept will form the premise of much of this chapter. Clinton makes note of how segregated social fabrics allow white people to commit acts of racism cloaked in colorblindness:

I try to have these kind of discussions with Miles from Breakestra [discussions about white privilege and racism in the music industry], and he's kind of like clueless, and I'm like "dude, your dad was in Little Feet (Fred Tackett), dude, your dad is like New Orleans musician. He had to have known, like, you know, what black musicians are going through." "Well, I don't see it." "Well you don't have to see it. You know? You kind of grew up in Topanga, and it's like, you're playing black music, and that's cool." But you know, I was like, "Look, you guys are playing all of this soul music. You really couldn't find black musicians to help you play this music? I mean, seriously"...The funny shit was, me and Wolf were the only black musicians in the group. And, I'm not trying to talk myself out of a gig, "Well fine, hire somebody white then." But I learned all of these tunes. He wouldn't let me play any LA

shows. None...I kind of did this show thinking I'm the drummer for the Breakestra, not the case. So, I'm not claiming anybody's racist, but it's easy to be, kind of like, content with your social circle, and just by design of our social fabric, we still are not really in a place where we can say we are integrated. But you have the privilege of taking our music and not associating with the offspring of the people that like had an impact on this music. Just on the design. "There's not going to be people from the hood in Topanga Canyon, Miles"...So, you have the privilege of going where you want, setting up shop wherever you want, and then taking the music that came out of these circumstances, and you give credit verbally, but you have no idea the struggle that, you know, that went through to create that...But his band has been, for the most part, white musicians (Cameron 2014).

Undoubtedly, in terms of culture generally, and popular culture more specifically, one of the atrocious outcomes of institutionalized racial segregation in the United States happened as white folks continued to use their position of power to steal, or to put it lightly, appropriate, black cultural forms. Clinton alludes to this in his discussion above about the Breakestra, a mostly white funk band whose leader, Miles Tackett, was raised in the 80s and 90s in Topanga Canyon, a virtually all-white community in the Santa Monica Mountains just south of Malibu and north of Santa Monica. There has been a long line of scholarship within the vein of Clinton's discussion that addresses the problems that arise when white musicians who are "inspired" by black artists become the dominant artists within genres originating within the black community simply because, as Clinton puts it, the "social fabric" of non-integrated settings tacitly privileges whiteness (Baraka 1963; Keil 1966; Vincent 1996; West 1998). This is especially true when the market forces of the segregated music industry circa 1990, attempted to turn a buck off of a genre. As Clinton notes:

I guess if you're still a struggling white rock musician...you can afford to have this kind of privileged attitude...like, "there is no problem 'cuz I don't have to look at it. You know, black people are doing just fine. Look, (you)

have Living Color and Fishbone.” It’s like, “Hello!?” “You know, isn’t Hootie and the Blowfish enough?”...It kind of bothers me because it’s like you’re in the privilege of position to kind of go, oh, between me and a white drummer, and we both have an equal kind of image, the white drummer’s gonna get it. If we’re equal, the white drummer’s still gonna get it because it’s easier to sell that image if you haven’t gotten over this shit yet (Cameron 2014).

Clinton’s statement runs directly counter to the more celebratory tone taken by the Breakestra on their website, where they describe their music as engaging a politics of integration following the LA riots:

If we were to construct a family tree of LA bands, Breakestra would be mentioned in the same breath as Weapon of Choice, Very Be Careful, Jurassic 5, Fishbone, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Jane’s Addiction and Ozomatli. These bands began in backyard jam sessions and random open mics held throughout the city from Echo Park to Venice, Highland Park to Topanga Canyon. Those early days were just after the ’92 Riots. Musicians from all over the city became tighter and many experimental jam sessions occurred fusing genres like funk, hip-hop, rock and acoustic soul resulting in truly innovative, multicultural (sic) music (The Breakestra 2016).

You cannot deny the cross-cultural appeal of the Breakestra and their keen ability to lay down super heavy, often obscure, funk covers, nor the diverse make-up of its audience and the potential for cultural work that unsettles the ideologies of segregation and white supremacy to take place in the Breakestra’s performance spaces. With this said, a purely celebratory attitude of such bands and the intercultural spaces in which they perform sits uncomfortably, or rather contradictorily, with Clinton’s charge that the Breakestra was formed by a musician who grew up in a segregated community, and who fails to recognize how the workings of white privilege have played a role in the formation of his band. Clinton reminds us that the appropriation of black musical forms must not be mistaken as

some sort of triumph over segregation and white supremacy. On the contrary, white appropriation is yet another reminder of how white supremacy erects those barriers that obstruct the achievement of such triumphs, particularly as these triumphs are attainable through musical forms and practices. Failing to acknowledge this, as Clinton claims Miles Tackett does, is a mistake that segregated social fabrics produce, when people with positions of privilege listen across the tracks, yet fail to consider the ways in which they are implicated in those struggles canonized by the songs they hear. Clinton's discussion also reminds us how easily white privilege can slip back into the workings of integrated social spaces, and how easily integration (and the celebration of multiculturalism) can become yet another mechanism through which white supremacy is reified, much like many facets of the desegregation effort of the LAUSD outlined in chapter 1.

Clinton's discussion also intervenes in an ongoing discussion within and outside of academia. In the past, theorists have commonly argued that a process of white appropriation is an apt model to account for the interracial exchange between black and white via musical production and consumption, and the power dynamics of ownership and authenticity that ensue, particularly when dealing with the genres of blues, jazz, rock and roll, and funk. Amiri Baraka, Charles Keil, Ricky Vincent, Cornel West, and De Angelo Stearnes all assert that there is a long-standing history in popular music in the United States of the appropriation of African American musical forms by whites (Baraka 1963; Keil 1966; Vincent; 1996; West 1999). In *Urban Blues*, Charles Keil defines a process he calls "The Appropriation-Revitalization

Syndrome” wherein a musical style is created in the African American community, is imitated by white musicians, and is then marketed to white audiences in a form that is more palatable for their consumption. In response to this appropriation, African Americans engage in a revitalization by creating a fresh musical style or form in an effort to restore the music to their community and ownership (Keil 1966). Vincent echoes Keil’s sentiments: “Each time a new musical/cultural development comes from the black community...it gets taken and eventually loses its original flavor, forcing its originators to develop something new” (1996: 20).

Keil was building upon theoretical frameworks developed by Amiri Baraka in his work *Blues People*, which documents the evolution of early jazz into swing and then into bebop, a process that is indicative of what Keil would later coin as the Appropriation-Revitalization Syndrome. As Baraka notes, “Swing music, which was the result of arranged big-band jazz, as it developed to a music that had almost nothing to do with blues, had very little to do with black America, though that is certainly where it came from” (1963: 164-65). He continues, “The music (swing) had moved so far into the mainstream, that soon white ‘swing’ bands developed that could play with some of the authentic accent of the great Negro band” (Baraka 1963: 163). Baraka continues by asserting that whites eventually muscled African American artists out of jobs playing swing music: “the growing number of white swing bands automatically qualified for these fairly well-paying jobs...‘The studio work...was almost completely restricted to white musicians and it was the men from the white orchestras who were getting the work” (1963: 164). So complete was the white

appropriation of jazz via swing, Baraka argues, that it was a “spectacle” when the white musician, Benny Goodman, hired the black musicians Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton, Charlie Christian, and Cootie Williams to play in his swing orchestra (1963: 164).

Baraka asserts that the revitalization of jazz forms occurred when African American musicians restored jazz to its African American roots – or what he terms the “blues impulse” – through the creation of bebop: “Bebop...re-established blues as the most important American form in Negro music by its astonishingly contemporary restatement of the basic blues impulse. The boppers returned to this basic form, reacting against the all but stifling advance artificial melody had made into jazz during the swing era” (1963: 194). Cornel West concurs with Baraka’s description of the evolution of jazz as being a process of appropriation by whites and subsequent revitalization by the African American Beboppers:

Our starting point (for this article) is the grand break from American mainstream music, especially imitated and co-opted Afro-American popular music, by the so-called bebop jazz musician – Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Dizzy Gillespie and others. Their particular way of Africanizing Afro-American jazz...was...a reaction to the white-dominated, melody-obsessed “swing jazz” (1999: 475).

De Angelo Stearnes concurs with Baraka, Vincent, Keil, and West with his outline of the historical occurrence of the repeated appropriation of African American musical forms by whites. He asserts that throughout history:

...black musical innovation (has been) co-opted (by whites), diluted, re-packaged, and sold off as “refined” and “improved” pop music. Check it out, New Orleans street music was chumped by Dixieland. Bebop was watered down by Cool Jazz. Rock and Roll was pushed out by white rock and rockabilly. Disco thumped Funk. Now gangster/buffoon rap preaching

negativity has duped everyone into thinking that it is Black culture under the guise of Hip Hop. In each instance, the strength of music has been destroyed because it lost its purpose and musical integrity (Vincent 1996: 20).

What Clinton adds to this discussion is the role that institutionalized segregation played in empowering whites to appropriate genres and secure royalties and paid gigs playing music that originated within black communities. To confound the issue, the emergence of mainstream colorblind ideology within the segregated “social fabrics” that continued to pervade the social landscape of desegregation era Los Angeles allowed whites to continue to engage this form of appropriation while appearing innocent of any act of racism or discrimination. Additionally, this continued existence of segregated “social circles” functioning under the doctrine of separate and unequal created a “social fabric” that allowed whites to continue to effortlessly and tacitly appropriate black musical forms without ever associating with black people. In so doing, whites were able to appear innocent, to cloak white supremacy and racial separatism behind a veil of what Baldwin, and later HoSang HoSang, refer to as “racial innocence,” as they engaged a seemingly passive appropriative theft from within the confines of segregated communities (Baldwin 1963; HoSang 2010). To reiterate Clinton’s assertion:

So, I’m not claiming anybody’s racist. I’m just saying it’s easy to be, kind of like, content with your social circle, and just by design of our social fabric, we still are not really in a place where we can say we are integrated. But you have the privilege of taking our music and not associating with the offspring of the people that, like had an impact on this music. Just on the design. “There’s not going to be any people from the hood in Topanga Canyon, Miles” (Cameron 2014).

In this sense, segregation continued to serve as a crutch upon which institutional racism was upheld in post-civil rights Los Angeles; it was a naturalized “design” that maintained structures of white supremacy through a façade of effortlessness devoid of intentional actors. As Clinton notes, white privilege allows white appropriation to prevail “just by design of our (segregated) social fabrics.” Yet, as we have already seen, segregation was anything but a natural “design.” Rather, it was a “design” that was vigorously constructed into an institution and an ideology through policies and agencies such as the zoning and lending practices of the FHA, and through centuries of active construction, it eventually became a self-perpetuating phenomenon – “just by design.” As such, segregation became the primary institution through which colorblindness would continue to operate as the dominant ideology that perpetuated white supremacy in the post-civil rights/post-Jim Crow era, and one of the ways white supremacy would be asserted through intercultural exchange was within the realm of popular music via white appropriation.

As opposed to prior generations during which white appropriation was done overtly, as witnessed in instances such as Paul Whiteman becoming the “King of Jazz,” Benny Goodman becoming the “King of Swing,” and Elvis Presley becoming the “King of Rock,” white appropriation during the desegregation era took a more covert tone as it perpetuated white supremacy through a veil of colorblindness and a “celebration” of multiculturalism. Taken together, then, what the Breakestra’s autobiographical account tells us, with Clinton’s critique in mind, is that celebratory

multiculturalism served as a useful tool for the production of white racial innocence during the desegregation era in Los Angeles.

Despite the seamlessness with which white privilege and racial innocence slipped back into the framework of both the celebratory multiculturalism and the desegregation effort that came to define racial politics in 1980s Los Angeles, many of my interviewees also cited examples of how integration began to unsettle racial isolation, thus spawning the emergence of new forms of social fabrics capable of challenging the racial hierarchy and providing a counter to white supremacy “just by design.” Such social fabrics were intercultural at their core, and, as the next section will explore, gave rise to a new, subversive form of colorblindness that would become an operative means through which racial separatism and white supremacy would be further challenged at a social psychological level within these intercultural social fabrics.

Desegregated Social Fabrics and Subversive Colorblindness as Counters to White Supremacy

We hear a lot about colorblindness. In its mainstream manifestation, it is the ideology that replaced blatant, outright racism in post-civil rights United States. It is the ideology that was used by the right (and many on the left) during the 80s and beyond to backpedal and justify dismantling many of the gains made intellectually and legally during the civil rights movement. It is an ideology that persists to this day and has led to claims that we have attained some sort of “post-racial America.” It is the ideology that would allow racists to continue to be racists long after the struggles

of civil rights activists made it socially unacceptable to do so. It is the ideology that was birthed as politicians and citizens alike appropriated and rearticulated emancipatory rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement in order to veil in racial innocence policies and practices of racial exclusion during the post-civil rights era. It is the ideology that spawned the assertion that we had already attained the post-racial America about which MLK dreamt, so we no longer needed policies that focused on the reparation of racial inequality. It is the ideology that supporters of Donald Trump no longer have to hide behind because they now have a space and a spokesperson for the openly, unapologetically racist worldviews that they have silently harbored since the 60s – worldviews that MLK made it nearly impossible for them to express publicly without encountering scorn, until now.

We do hear a lot about colorblindness. And rightly so. In fact, it has become something of a pariah in the fields of sociology and cultural studies. And again, rightly so. However, the condemnation of colorblindness is sometimes extended to challenge any celebratory rhetoric concerning race relations in the US. Such rhetoric has become a sort of straw person, an effigy to be symbolically burned at the mere suggestion that gains have been made toward combatting racial inequality. While I do not mean to diminish the important work done to expose the workings of white supremacy under the cloak of colorblindness, I do wish to explore another ideology that became apparent during several of my interviews. I will refer to this ideology as *subversive colorblindness* because, rather than upholding the status quo's investments in white supremacy (as is the case with mainstream colorblindness), subversive

colorblindness performs cultural work in the opposite direction as it functions to *subvert* systemic racism and white supremacy. I qualify colorblindness with the adjective subversive with the caveat that subversive colorblindness, as an ideology, was employed intuitively by those whose (trans)formations of self were formed in desegregated schools and social fabrics, and was thus engaged more effortlessly than the term “subversive” tends to imply.

Subversive colorblindness does bare some similarities to the typical white racial innocence of the time, and could thus be easily lumped together with mainstream colorblind ideology. That is, both ideologies do seem to rest upon a premise of racial avoidance as they deemphasize race as a centralizing component within their structures. However, whereas mainstream colorblind ideology allowed pro-segregationists and white supremacists to appear racially neutral as they continued to push their agendas from segregated communities during the post-civil rights era (and allowed white liberals to “celebrate” multiculturalism with a round of kumbaya around a cushy campfire of white privilege), subversive colorblindness emerged as youths who had settled into desegregated social fabrics undertook the incredibly innovative (yet seemingly intuitive) cultural work of forging a precedent for interculturality in the first era of legally mandated desegregation in Los Angeles – work that provided a counter to white supremacy and caused the institution and ideology of segregation to become unstable.

Consider an interview I conducted with Raymond (Ray) Thomas, the guitarist for the locally famous, interracial (albeit predominantly white) rock steady band

Ocean 11. In the interview, Ray discussed his take on the racism and homophobia that he witnessed growing up and playing music in the predominantly white and Latino working class neighborhood of Silverlake in the 80s and 90s. As he notes:

It was not in our thought process... We grew up in a tolerant generation. Wave your flag, whatever it is. If it's a gay flag, a Jamaican flag. It doesn't, we don't think about it. Like "oh, we have this black guy." It's just like he's just a guy... Nah, we didn't encounter much racism growing up in Silverlake. There was a gay bashing thing, where they were getting beat up, but the gays fought back... and said we're not going to take it anymore. Queer Nation. "We're here, we're queer, get used to it," and uh, that was it. It stopped. The gay bashing stopped (Thomas 2013).

At first glance, this could be construed as a mainstream colorblind statement, one which dismisses the importance of race and the continued pervasiveness of racism in post-civil rights Los Angeles. Indeed, considering that Ray is a white guitarist playing rock steady, a precursor to Jamaican reggae, this statement could also appear to be indicative of a colorblind ideology that enabled Ray to engage a process of white appropriation of Afro-Caribbean musical forms. In all truth, this was my knee jerk reaction when I heard Ray say "he's just a guy." However, I began to rethink this position as I considered Ray's assertion, "wave your flag, whatever it is." This suggests an acknowledgement, indeed, even an embracement, of difference, not some attempt to gloss over racial difference as irrelevant or unimportant. While Ray does dismiss the centrality of race in the formation of the interpersonal networks and scenes wherein Ocean 11 was formed (this will be discussed further below), thus giving his discussion an air of mainstream colorblindness, he simultaneously embraces racial difference and interculturality as something natural, a given – so much so that he does not think about it. "Wave your flag, whatever it is," Ray says.

This runs counter to the mainstream model of colorblindness that veils racism with assimilatory rhetoric as it argues that we all must unite under “one flag,” thus wiping away cultural difference for the sake of perpetuating the supremacy of the dominant group and its cultural practices.

At this point in the interview, I also began to wonder if Ray was engaging some version of the celebratory multiculturalism Clinton outlines in his discussion of the Breakestra. However, as the interview continued, I began to consider Ray’s above statement within the context of his musical career, which led me to conceptualize Ray’s ideology as being less in line with mainstream colorblindness or some superficial celebration of multiculturalism, and more in line with the subversive colorblindness I am outlining here. This is especially pronounced when you consider Ray’s reflections on Ocean 11’s legacy and as his proudest achievement with music:

Ray: So we were a third wave ska band, and...people didn’t really know about the Skadelites and Desmond Decker and just all those great artists that were coming out of Jamaica in the 60s. People didn’t know Bob Marley played ska as a teenager. So we turned people onto that, and it’s still rolling. There is a big scene, and we still have a big fan base even though we have only played one or two shows in the last 10 years...There was a core, Jordan, me, Oliver, Persephone, lead singer, Persephone Laird. Yup, she’s still doing it. She goes under the name Queen P, and she’s helped, she’s been instrumental in bringing in what they call the legends – a lot of these old guys out here to do shows. So, I don’t know, maybe they make \$5,000 or something...plus airfare and go back to Jamaica, and that’s a nice payday for a weekend’s work. So they had Keith and Tex who hadn’t seen each other since the 60’s. They did that song (singing the melody) “Stop that train, I want to get on”...and over here (The US, specifically LA) it was more just certain people discovering that stuff (Jamaican reggae and second wave ska, or English two-tone) and saying, “What’s the roots of it? What’s the roots of Two-Tone?” That’s what we (Ocean 11) were doing. Nobody was really doing the rock steady or traditional ska. There were reggae bands that wanted to be Bob Marley, but no one dug deeper, so I felt like I helped to bring, that’s what I’m proud of, I helped to bring an awareness to the early stuff, and now

those old guys, if they're still alive, get to come over here and do shows, and they're happy.

Me: Right, and is that one of the...proudest things that you've achieved through music?

Ray: Yeah, in every bar that's worth anything has a reggae night, or has a DJ that spins ska, rock steady, um like...the Echo...has Dub Club every Wednesday. It's huge...Scientist does the mix over there, who was a student of King Tubby originally (aka Dub Daddy from Central Kingston).

Me: And you attribute that to Ocean 11 bringing back the roots stuff?

Ray: Yeah, bringing the awareness. Most bands were doing two-tone stuff at that time. That was part of our legacy. I think that's why Hepcat ("seminary ska band" as Ray describes them, also a locally famous intercultural "roots" band) always wanted us, because they knew we were trying to really do the real thing. 'Cuz they were too (Thomas 2013).

In this sense, Ray made meaning of his musical career through helping to establish an intercultural scene in Los Angeles that popularized Afro-Caribbean musical traditions – traditions that had taken a back seat to reggae – and provided opportunities for Afro-Caribbean musicians to benefit monetarily from newly available gigs. Meanwhile, Ray and Ocean 11's engagement with Afro-Caribbean musical forms resulted in them getting cheated out of royalties by Island Def Jam for the track they contributed to the album "Ska Island." As Ray notes:

Ocean 11 played on "Ska Island," which was Island Records... Island Records got us, Fishbone, Skadelites, a bunch of bands that did this compilation record of all covers...Island Records never paid me for that, or paid us for that...They merged with Def Jam and claimed they didn't know anything about it. Although, you could still buy that record...During the merger, we got lost in the shuffle. I don't know. We're just nobody, so why would they pay attention. But I had a contract that said we were supposed to get something. That was the case with most of the labels, was that since you don't have any clout, they could just ignore you and not pay you (Thomas 2013).

Undoubtedly, Ray's ending statement here points to the mechanisms through which white supremacy and white appropriation operate in the music industry. Those who are "nobody" with no "clout," get cheated out of royalties and opportunities for advancement within the industry, and much of the time, by the very design of the predominantly white social fabric of the segregated music industry, this means musicians of color are the most vulnerable to this form of appropriation and theft. However, in this instance, it is Ray and Ocean 11 who are exploited by the recording industry as they are simply not paid for their work. Ray's musical career thus runs counter to the classic case of white appropriation wherein black artists are muscled out of the genres they establish while white musicians become the beneficiaries of the monetary gains and royalties made possible through popularizing black musical forms.

Furthermore, at the time of the interview, Ray had begun taking courses at a culinary school. He still plays music today, and makes a buck here and there, but he has moved on from focusing on it as a career. As he notes, "At John Marshall High School (a magnet school in the East Hollywood/Silverlake area)...Mr. Lepree told me, 'you're never going to make it in this business,' and actually, he was right." Considering that Ray's proudest achievement was establishing a scene that afforded Afro-Caribbean legends the opportunity to travel to the states and make a "good weekend's pay," while Ray was stiffed by the recording industry and forced to move on to non-musical forms of employment, it becomes clear that Ray's legacy as a member of Ocean 11 and his role in helping to establish an intercultural scene that

popularized 1960s Afro-Caribbean musical forms in desegregation era Los Angeles were anything but classic cases of white appropriation functioning through the veil of mainstream colorblindness. On the contrary, Ray moved on from his career as a rock steady guitarist, yet remains proud of his role in popularizing a once obscure Afro-Caribbean musical form and establishing an intercultural two tone/rock steady scene that would eventually provide gigs and monetary benefits for the Afro-Caribbean “legends” to whom his own musical career paid homage. Ray’s story, then, is indicative of how desegregated social fabrics within which subversive colorblindness was operative became viable antiracist sites capable of countering white supremacy.

Another example of subversive colorblindness surfaced as I was interviewing Geoff “Double G” Gallegos, the conductor and orchestral leader for daKAH, a massive Los Angeles based Hip Hop orchestra that began performing in the late 90s at small clubs and theaters such as Club Dump (later known as the Viper Room) in Hollywood, Fais Do Do in West Adams, and The Temple Bar in Santa Monica. It has since taken its talents to the stage in venues as large as the Disney Concert Hall in Downtown and the Los Angeles Opera’s Ring Festival at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). daKAH’s music blends elements of jazz, classical and hip hop using an orchestral architecture that typically ranges anywhere between 40 to 80 instruments in size, depending on the venue, the size of the grant used for funding and the pieces being performed. In this sense, daKAH has not only bridged diverse ethnic cultures into cohesive orchestral arrangements, but it has also played an active

roll in orchestrating a cultural encounter at the divides between young and old, rich and poor, and “high art” and popular culture in the city. As Double G notes:

Double G: But I think that the best bi-product of daKAH has been a generational thing. Once the string section came in, once we started looking like an orchestra –

Me: Right. Like a classical orchestra –

Double G: Yeah, once it started looking like a classical orchestra, some of the older folks started checking it out, and then the more open-minded of the older folks kept coming back, and they were like, “Dude, this is really, OK, this is good. This is valid. This is music. You know? This feels like an orchestra.”

Me: You’re bridging the high art and low art divide, man.

Double G: ...it’s the generations...and like our first show at Disney Concert Hall in 2004...That was the weirdest audience at Disney Hall ever, man. It was the weirdest audience.

Me: Was it younger folks?

Double G: Everybody. It was like the symphony people and the daKAH people. It was rowdy. So rowdy. But I was surprised. There were a lot of old, old folks there, a lot of white folks, a lot of old white folks there. I was like, “OK (in a ‘surprised but this is cool’ kind of tone)... and, like a lot of my family had come, my whole family showed up. My great-uncle, man, he’s so funny. He said, “(heavy Mexican accent of an elder) Oh-uh, I heard Geoff had a show-uh, Geoff had a concert. I thought it was gunna be a gymnasium. This is Carnegie Hall.” Uncle Ray, man, he’s so funny...

Me: You know that’s funny, man. I’ve never, I guess I’ve never consciously thought of the generational divide that daKAH bridges...

Double G: I think it was because it looked and sounded familiar (to the older white symphony crowd). You know? It was, It was something that the symphony heads could go, “OK, well that feels right. That feels like something I like.”

Me: Right. It’s not just a drum kit, and a guitar and a bass.

Double G: No. And then, like, there are, of course, especially like the older guys, they see a violin player doing this (makes gesture of violinist playing

with loose, dance-like movements, counter to the minimal movements that classical musicians are trained to exert), you know? And then, “(older person says) Wow, it’s like a party on the stage (Gallegos 2014).

The pieces performed by daKAH are composed in such a way as to maintain accessibility for a variety of cultural sensibilities among the musicians. To achieve this, Double G composes all of the pieces on charts for each instrument, while leaving space for improvisation. In so doing, he allows room for the strict “play what’s on the page” approach of classical and the freer “develop your own sound and style” approach of jazz and hip hop.

Within Los Angeles, daKAH is quite well-known, especially among musicians, and is perhaps most well-known outside of the city for “Gangsta’ Wagner,” a piece commissioned by the LA Opera and Grand Performances (an organization that offers free shows downtown in California Plaza next to the Los Angeles Museum for Contemporary Art and is funded by philanthropic organizations, endowments for arts and museums, local businesses and transnational corporations) wherein Double G draws connections between the *fear* induced by the Nazis in Germany and the *fear* induced by gangbangers on LA’s streets during the 90s. Here is how he rationalizes the composition of this piece:

It was the most hard, sinister Wagner shit mixed with the most hard beats, MC goin’ “BUH-DUH-DUH-DUH-DAH (almost sounding like the discharging of an automatic weapon),” like hard, the whole shit was hard...It was gangster rap, man. It was gangster rap with Wagner...I had kind of like an esoteric concept for it...Like, you know the movie Clockwork Orange, yeah?...One of the intentions was to kind of brainwash him with the violent images. But in that process, because the music mixed in with it, he got the same, like the same uh, operant conditioning. So like he hears Beethoven’s 9th, and he gets sick. And so, the same thing kind of happened with Wagner, and the same thing happened with everything that got sampled in gangster rap... You know

Wagner was Hitler's favorite composer, and so like a lot of the aesthetic of the Nazi party was Wagner. So there's a stigma attached to that. You hear Stevie Wonder's Pastime Paradise – Gansta's Paradise (a Coolio song that sampled the Stevie Wonder song). Like all this beautiful music gets mixed in with all these kind of negative messages, and so, I took the two stigmatized musics, and my intention was like, I wanted it to be like, ok, if like Hitler was going to...Auschwitz, if he had a stereo, he'd be listening to Wagner...And I remember, like, in the early 90s (a time in Los Angeles when the murder rate was triple what it is presently [LA County Crime Statistics 2016]), you would hear that like (makes the sound of deep bass bumping from a car), and right away you'd be kind of like, "let me get out of the way of the windows," you know? And then the tires would screech. Like, "Fuck." And so, there's a stigma there. There's like a fear...So that whole show was about fear...I want to make you afraid. Like I want this to make you fear afraid (Gallegos 2014).

Considering the remarkable manner in which daKAH bridges divides that span not only race, class and generations, but continents and historical eras as well, it is not surprising that daKAH included members from nearly every corner of the city, many of whom attended the desegregated schools. In fact, several of my interviewees and members of the bands they had formed either played with or were regular members of daKAH, and Double G himself was the saxophonist for Weapon of Choice (Lonnie Marshall's band discussed in chapter 2) for many years. What does come as a surprise, however, is that, while hiring members for the ensemble, Double G never considered the race or cultural background of the musicians he was hiring. He simply drew upon word of mouth referrals he obtained through the interpersonal intercultural networks that he had established during the 90s as he was playing in intercultural ensembles such as Weapon of Choice, ensembles that were instrumental to the formation of the intercultural scenes outlined in chapters 2 and 4. As Double G notes:

daKAH was built on word of mouth referrals and people sending me tracks, playing me CDs...or more word of mouth. Like, "Oh, I know, I know somebody who plays violin. They're cool, and they can play. Never once did

I say, “what gender are they?” or “what race are they?” or “where are they from?” or any of that. I was like, “You know them. You’re vouching for them. OK. Bring them to rehearsal. You’ve played with them” (Gallegos 2014).

Again, with Double G, we see subversive colorblindness operative as he pieced together the various musicians that would form daKAH. The interpersonal networks Double G established in the music scenes he joined when he arrived to Los Angeles from Colorado in the early 90s were marked by interculturality. So much so that Double G was able to put together a massive interracial orchestra made up of members from all over the city without any conscious attempt to consider the race of the musicians he hired for the project. This was only possible because, within these scenes, interculturality had become naturalized. This is remarkable when we consider that just thirty years prior to daKAH’s formation, much of the Los Angeles housing market was still legally segregated.

In an interview with Ulises Bella from Ozomatli, we see another example of how subversive colorblindness was an operative ideology within desegregated scenes that naturalized interculturality, thus destabilizing the institution of segregation:

DW: When Ozo was starting out, did you guys, I mean you were in the tail of the riots. And the way I experienced the riots was a real heightened sense of feeling the color of my flesh after the riots. You know what I mean?...Did Ozo have the sense that they were forming something so intercultural in the face of this kind of divisive time? Was that in your consciousness?

Uli: No, not so much because I think for most of us being a musician was before all that shit, so it was like more like, “can this motherfucker play? Oh, he can play? Well, who gives a fuck what he is.” You know? It was like that more...Of course the going joke with Ozo is like, dude, we fuckin' put an ad out for a Japanese guy, a duh duh duh duh duh guy...Nah, it was quite the contrary. It was more like, “were you down to do it? And could you play the fuckin' shit” (Bella 2014)?

Putting aside the fact that musical fluency trumps racial affiliation in this example, a fact that allowed music to play a vital role in sustaining intercultural scenes during this era, let us focus on Ulises' assertion that Ozomatli did not intentionally bring together an interracial group of musicians during their formation. Ozomatli is, in Josh Kun's words, "a band of Chicanos and Salvadorans and Basques and Jews and Japanese and Filipinos and blacks and whites and browns..." (2005: 219). The formation and success of a band such as this would, arguably, not have been possible in previous eras in LA's history. As Justin Porè (one of the percussionists for Ozomatli) and I discussed in an interview:

DW: This is one of the things that is so interesting about Ozomatli to me, dude, is that like 20 years before you guys started, you wouldn't have been possible, you know?

Justin: That's true.

DW: I mean maybe you would. I mean if you really fought for it, you know?

Justin: Yeah, yeah. We didn't have to fight for it. It was just like (laughing), it just came together (Porè 2015).

How is it, then, that Ozomatli formed as an intercultural ensemble without any conscious attempt made to consider race – a sort of colorblindness – on the part of its members? In the same way that segregation and white supremacy became naturalized and self-perpetuating "just by design" of *segregated* social fabrics, Ozomatli formed as an intercultural ensemble with a similar effortlessness – a coalescing of an incredibly diverse group of young people who came together "just by design" of their *desegregated* social fabric. And, important to this discussion, this effortless cohesion

was possible, in part, because nearly all of Ozomatli's members had attended desegregated schools, and had, in turn, established intercultural social fabrics that they drew upon as they formed as a band in the early nineties (Ozomatli's formation is discussed thoroughly in chapter 2). Whereas proponents of mainstream colorblindness argue that *we should not consider race*, and in so doing, reinforce the mechanisms that perpetuate segregated social fabrics and white supremacy, the members of Ozomatli *didn't have to consider race* during the formation of their intercultural alliance because they had spent their youths establishing interpersonal networks that were marked, among other things, by interculturality – interpersonal networks that performed the cultural work of disrupting segregated social fabrics and white supremacy. In so doing, they had begun to destabilize the oppressive force of hundreds of years of segregation. In this sense, an ideology that did not consciously centralize race – a subversive colorblindness – was engaged by the members of Ozomatli during the band's formation. However, contrary to the mainstream case of colorblindness, which serves to uphold the inequalities produced through segregation, this form of colorblindness was birthed through the naturalization of interracial interpersonal networks that had emerged during the desegregation era – interpersonal networks that took interculturality as a starting point, rather than a goal to achieve.

The Repackaging of Subversive Colorblindness: Celebratory Multiculturalism in a Resegregating City

On April 23, 2010, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa declared that April 23 would be reserved for and celebrated as Ozomatli Day in the city of Los

Angeles. In his speech to inaugurate this day, he calls attention to the multiculturalism engaged by Ozomatli as reflective of the city's diversity. As he declares:

It's great to be here to celebrate Ozomatli Day today... We celebrate them because they see art as a way of expressing life. Their music is the music of LA, and I wanted to acknowledge, uh, this great group because they're not only talented; they're not only reflective of LA's cultural diversity; they're not only folks that go all over the world; they've never forgotten their roots... So I declare today Ozomatli Day (Villaraigosa 2010).

Undoubtedly, this is quite an achievement for any group of musicians – to be honored by their city's mayor with a holiday in their band's name. Moreover, the fact that Villaraigosa honors Ozomatli's particular breed of interculturality as “the music of LA” speaks powerfully to the ways in which Los Angeles' multiculturalism has disrupted the assimilatory representation and adherence to Eurocentric cultural practices within US society. Indeed, Villaraigosa's speech expresses the sentiment that the only way to represent the cultural landscape of Los Angeles is with a diversity of cultural forms – something Ozomatli's music does with a harmonic cohesiveness that makes their cultural amalgamations appear seamless and effortless, much like the subversive colorblindness they engaged during their formation. In this sense, the musical forms and cultural (trans)formations of Ozomalti (as well as others who I interviewed) exhibit the potential for cultural difference to serve as a catalyst for a productive unity that offers a way out of some of the antagonisms that continue to divide Los Angeles, and the nation, along racial lines – a bold counter to the racial uprisings that preceded and occurred in the wake of the implementation of the desegregation effort. Ozomatli, their music, and the subversive colorblindness that

drives their coalescence and compositions thus occupy a sort of utopic space of racial harmony – the same space to which mainstream colorblindness and celebratory multiculturalism allude yet oppose as they become mechanisms purposed for the maintenance of white supremacy. We can only hope that in the establishment of Ozomatli Day, Mayor Villaraigosa has helped further this utopic project.

Of course, in the same year that Mayor Villaraigosa delivered this speech and honored the city's multiculturalism with the declaration of Ozomatli Day, US census data was being collected that would deliver a harsh indictment to the city of Los Angeles' institutional efforts to rectify socioeconomic inequality along racial lines during the post-civil rights and desegregation eras. According to 2010 US census data and the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates (which collected data for the US Census from January 2011-December 2015), the per capita income of white individuals (as opposed to households) for 2010 in the city of Los Angeles was \$51,289. The per capita income for Hispanic and Latino individuals for this same year was \$13,977, while American Indian and Alaska Native individuals made \$20,823, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander individuals made \$22,178, black individuals made \$22,479, and Asian individuals earned \$29,534. This tells us that, on average, whites made nearly four times the income of Hispanics and Latinos, over two and half times as much as American Indians and Alaska Natives, well over twice as much as blacks, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and over a third more than Asian individuals.

These figures are exacerbated when we consider the poverty rates for each of these groups (note that poverty figures are based upon ACS 1-year estimates, which collected data for the US Census Bureau between January 2015-December 2015, because ACS 5-year estimates are not available for this statistic in 2010). In 2010, only 10.2% of whites in Los Angeles earned an income that placed them below the national poverty level. Meanwhile, 25.4% of Hispanics and Latinos, 25.7% of blacks, 19.7% of American Indian and Alaska Natives, 21.5% of Native American and Pacific Islanders, and 13.6% of Asians earned incomes below the national poverty level. The most dramatic of these statistics indicate that Hispanics, Latinos, and blacks were two and a half times as likely to be in poverty as whites within the city, while American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were twice as likely to be in poverty as were whites. Additionally, although all non-white groups accounted for 70% of the city of Los Angeles' population, these groups disproportionately accounted for 84% of the city's residents living in poverty – the most dramatic case represented by Hispanics and Latinos who made up less than half of the city's population yet accounted for over 63% of the city's residents living in poverty. In other words, while whites not of Hispanic origin accounted for nearly 30% of the city's population that was considered for poverty statistics, they only accounted for just over 15% of city's working poor in 2010. Meanwhile, all other racial groups, with the exception of Asians (a fact that will be interrogated below with NACSS data that disaggregates Asians and other racial groups by national country of

origin), accounted for a larger percentage of the city's working poor than their percentage of the city's overall population.

Not only were people of color far over-represented within the labor class of working poor, but unemployment rates by race told a similar story about the state of income inequality in the city at the same time Villaraigosa was delivering his speech celebrating the diversity of Los Angeles' social landscape. At this time, according to the ACS 5-year estimates data, 7.9% of whites were unemployed while unemployment rates were 14.3% for blacks, 10.6% for American Indians and Alaska Natives, 9.9% for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, 9.3% for Hispanics and Latinos, and 7.7% for Asians. The most drastic of these data indicate that, when compared to whites, blacks were nearly twice as likely to be unemployed, while American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were roughly a quarter more likely to be unemployed.

All of these data remained relatively stable over the next five years, and in 2015, the most recent year for which the ACS 1-year and 5-year estimates data is available, the data told a similar story to the one it told in 2010, albeit a bit grimmer for certain groups in certain areas. In 2015, the per capita income of white individuals (not of Hispanic origin) was \$53,283 while, on average, Hispanic and Latino individuals made \$14,725, American Indians and Alaska Natives made \$17,837, black individuals made \$23,407, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders made \$25,162, and Asians made \$31,608. This indicates that, on average, whites earned nearly four times as much as Hispanics and Latinos, three times as

much as American Indians and Alaska Natives, well over twice as much as blacks, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and well over a third more than Asians.

Poverty rates increased slightly for each group, with whites, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders seeing the smallest increase at 1.8% and 1.7% respectively. However, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were the only group whose overall population numbers decreased within the city between 2010 and 2015, so much so that much of the data acquired for these groups was statistically insignificant. Ultimately, in 2015, 12% of whites earned an income below that of the national poverty level, while 28.6 % of Hispanics and Latinos, 28.4% of blacks, 26.5% of American Indians and Alaska Natives, 23.2% of Native Hawaiians, and 15.9% of Asians earned an income below the national poverty level. Similar to the data in 2010, then, the 2015 data tell us that blacks, Hispanics and Latinos were nearly two and a half times as likely to be living in poverty than were whites, while American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders were twice as likely and Asians were over a third as likely. Additionally, mirroring the data from 2010, although non-white groups accounted for just 70% of the city of Los Angeles' population, these groups accounted for 84% of the city's residents living in poverty – the most dramatic case again represented by Hispanics and Latinos who made up less than half of the city's population yet accounted for over 63% of the city's residents living in poverty.

Unemployment rates by race varied between the ACS 1-year and 5-year estimates in 2015, showing a slight increase from 2010 for all races according to the

5-year estimates and a significant decrease since 2010 for all groups in the 1-year estimates. Because the 5 year estimates use larger samples and are more reliable, I will proceed with these findings, which indicate that all races endured a slight 1-2% increase in unemployment, except for Asians, whose unemployment rates remained roughly the same as they were in 2010. These data tell us a similar story as they did in 2010, albeit a larger discrepancy existed for Hispanics, Latinos, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders when compared to whites. Thus, in 2015, blacks were nearly twice as likely to be unemployed than whites, while Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were over a third more likely to be unemployed, Hispanics, Latinos, American Indians and Alaska Natives were over a quarter more likely to be unemployed, and Asians were slightly less likely to be unemployed when compared to whites.

A 2016 report titled *The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles*, which was released by the National Assets Scorecard for Communities of Color (NASCC), gives us a more nuanced account than the data acquired by the ACS, and thus sheds more light upon the reasons for the socioeconomic disparity that continued to be prevalent between whites and other races throughout the post-civil rights and desegregation eras, and through the present. This report made use of all existing national data sets while supplementing them with original survey data that further disaggregated racial and ethnic data by national origin. Most importantly, the nuances of this report's findings give us a sense of the roles that institutionalized racism and the historical workings of white supremacy played in the perpetuation of class inequality along

racial lines within Los Angeles throughout the post-civil rights and desegregation era, and continuing through the present.

One of the most blatant socioeconomic impacts of the historical workings of white supremacy in the US is the gross accumulation of wealth by white households when compared to other races. This trend holds true in present-day Los Angeles, and is reflected in the 2016 NASCC report as white households are shown to have a median net worth of \$355,000. With the exception of Japanese, Asian Indian and Chinese households (who frequently immigrated to the US already possessing substantial capital and net worth), all other racial group were shown to have much lower median net worth than white households. The greatest disparities existed for Mexicans (\$3500), US blacks (\$4000), Koreans (\$23,400), other Latinos (\$42,500), Vietnamese (\$61,500), and African blacks (\$72,00). The most striking takeaway from these data is that:

Racial and ethnic differences in net worth show the extreme financial vulnerability faced by some nonwhite households. U.S. black and Mexican households have 1 percent of the wealth of whites in Los Angeles—or one cent for every dollar of wealth held by the average white household in the metro area. Koreans hold 7 percent, other Latinos have 12 percent, and Vietnamese possess 17 percent of the wealth of white households (Chen et. Al. 2016: 6).

The detrimental effects upon communities of color of this disproportionate accumulation of wealth by white households in Los Angeles is exacerbated when we consider the median total value assets for white households when compared to that of most other races disaggregated by national origin. The big picture details that while white households have a median net worth of \$355,000, all other racial groups have a

much lower median net worth with the exception of Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Indians. The most drastic examples of this disparity between white households and other racial groups were outlined by the NASCC report as follows:

Median total asset values for all other racial and ethnic groups were significantly lower (than white households) — U.S. black (\$30,000), Mexican (\$5,000), other Latino (\$43,000), Korean (\$28,400), and Vietnamese (\$40,000) households. The data reveal an astounding racial wealth divide in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (Chen et. Al. 2016: 6).

Accounting for this disparity is the fact that, with few exceptions, whites are far more likely to hold assets in stocks, mutual funds, and investment trusts, have Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or private annuity, and are more likely to be homeowners (Chen et. Al. 2016: 6). The ability of whites within Los Angeles to accumulate more wealth than other racial groups, especially in terms of homeownership/private property ownership and the accompanying building of equity, largely results from institutional racism and discriminatory practices of federal programs such as the FHA's discriminatory loaning practices that restricted access to low interest loans and government subsidies to whites during the postwar period (a fact discussed in depth in chapter 1). This in turn led to white flight and neighborhoods etched into "vanilla" suburbs with higher tax bases, higher quality education, and steeper rates of accretion of wealth and equity (Avila 2004). The city has yet to offer a counter to such practices by providing other racial groups exclusive access to government-subsidized opportunities to build equity and wealth through property ownership. The consequence of this form of institutionalized racism and white supremacy has been devastating to class equality along racial lines within Los Angeles until the present.

The effect of institutional racism upon communities of color within Los Angeles is furthered by the fact that, while “some households of color are less likely to own homes, among home owners they are more likely (than white households) to have high debt to equity ratios on their homes, especially 88.1 percent of Filipinos, 80.5 percent of other Latino, 77.1 percent of Mexican, 78.4 percent of U.S. black, and 76.3 percent of African black homeowners” (Chen et. Al. 2016: 7). Furthering this burden is the fact that, because communities of color have higher cost debt and homeowners of color have higher debt to equity ratios, it is even more difficult for communities of color to acquire credit. Because communities of color “are more likely to be denied credit...their ability to build assets is limited” (Chen et. Al. 2016: 7). Hence, while white homeownership of the postwar period attained via low interest loans and government subsidies (welfare, in effect) allowed whites more access to acquire credit and to thus further build their assets, wealth and equity, the opposite is true for the majority of homeowners of color in present-day Los Angeles. This fact thus builds upon the practices of institutionalized racism that was engaged by the FHA in the postwar period. Furthermore, the 2016 NASCC report also draws upon earlier research that shows “that when blacks have similar credits (sic) scores as whites, they are still more likely to be denied credit. This contributes to lower asset ownership and lower asset values when compared with white households” (Chen et. Al. 2016: 8). Hence, in present-day Los Angeles, multiculturalism has, in many ways, done little to curb socioeconomic inequality along racial lines.

While US Census data, ACS survey data, and NASCC survey data expose

socioeconomic inequality and the continued pervasiveness of institutionalized racism within both the public and private sectors of Los Angeles institutions, other research focuses on whether the city is currently in a process of resegregation. This would not be surprising considering that the passage of Proposition 1 forced the LAUSD to end its mandatory bussing program in the early 80s, only a couple of years after it had begun. This drastically reduced the scope of the of the desegregation effort, and thus limited the possibilities to a much smaller pool of youths to engage this state sanctioned opportunity to forge desegregated social fabrics in the post-civil rights era. Additionally, the process of desegregation was further curtailed well into the 90s (at least) as black and Latino homebuyers were more likely to have their mortgages approved when applying for homes in black and Latino neighborhoods (Reibel 2000).

Despite these hindrances, some researchers remain optimistic about the state of racial integration within the city. For example, Anderson et al (2015) made use of advanced geo-computational software to “analyze the demographic compositions of the neighborhoods for every individual living in the Los Angeles area in 2000 and 2010” (1). Their findings indicate that nearly every neighborhood in Los Angeles experienced a sharp decline in racial segregation between the years 2000-2010. As they argue:

In 2000, about 40 percent of the population in Los Angeles lived in strongly segregated neighborhoods. Ten years later, in 2010, only a third of the population was still living in such neighborhoods. This trend towards increasing diversity is further strengthened by a lack of demographic stability in Los Angeles’ neighborhoods. Almost every other inhabitant lives in a neighborhood that has experienced significant shifts in the ethno-racial composition of its population during the last decade and a half (1).

Other researchers share this optimism as they “argue that racial residential integration is becoming much more common, and one study by Glaeser and Vigdor (2012) even goes as far as claiming the ‘end of segregation’” (Ellen 2000; Maly 2005 [from Bader and Wankertien 2016: 135]). Additionally, Chiland (2016) cites an earlier data set compiled by Bader and Wankertien (2016), which found that of the four largest metropolises in the US, Los Angeles is the most racially integrated and is home to the largest number of “quadrival” neighborhoods – “areas where whites, blacks, Latinos, and Asians can all be found in sizable numbers. According to the study, about one in five neighborhoods in the LA area meets this description” (1). On the surface, these findings seem to confirm Mayor Villaraigosa’s declaration that Ozomatli’s compositions are the music of Los Angeles – intercultural musical amalgamations that accurately represent the multicultural character of an increasingly integrated city.

Other researchers are not so optimistic, however, as they present models of geographic mobility by race – such as growth mixture models, racial succession, and gentrification – that challenge earlier research, which was heavily reliant upon older models such as the decline of white flight. Such research argues that Los Angeles is not as integrated as earlier research suggests, but is rather currently in the process of resegregation (Bader and Wankertien 2016; Chiland 2016; Chang 2016; Hwang and Sampson 2014). As Chiland (2016) notes, the same data set that indicated that Los Angeles was home to the most “quadrival” neighborhoods out of the four biggest metropolises in the nation, also showed that, “around 40 percent of Los Angeles's

racially mixed neighborhoods are in the process of becoming more segregated” (1).

Bader and Wankertien (2016), the authors to whom Chiland refers, based this finding upon research that engaged a growth mixture model in order to interrogate assertions that Los Angeles was in fact becoming increasingly integrated. As Bader and

Wankertien note:

... previous studies only measure the presence of racial groups in neighborhoods, not the degree of integration among those groups. As a result, those studies do not detect gradual racial succession that ends in racially segregated neighborhoods. We demonstrate how a new approach based on growth mixture models can be used to identify patterns of racial change that distinguish between durable integration and gradual racial succession (2016: 1).

Interpreting their data set through the lens of a growth mixture model, Bader and Wankertien found that while Los Angeles does boast a large number of racially diverse neighborhoods, gradual racial succession has caused around 40% of neighborhoods within city to be well on their way to becoming single-race neighborhoods.

While Logan and Zhang (2010) found that white flight, a commonly cited reason for racial segregation within Los Angeles and other metropolises, was virtually non-existent since the 1980s, Bader and Wankertien argue that segregation is still possible in the absence of white flight, and that a process of resegregation is occurring in Los Angeles largely due to another practice of “white avoidance.” While whites have ceased the practice of leaving Los Angeles neighborhoods when non-whites move in, they are unlikely to move into a racially diverse neighborhood, and rather, more than any other race, choose single-race neighborhoods when they do

move. The exception to this trend, they argue, is the fact that whites do move into racially diverse neighborhoods that are gentrifying, but, as Bader notes, there are far more neighborhoods that are resegregating than are gentrifying (Bader and Wankertien 2016; Barragan 2016).

However, there is also room to argue that gentrification is yet another cause of resegregation as more affluent, often white, incomers push out existing lower-income residents of color, thus leading to displacement and resegregation. Additionally, Hwang and Sampson (2014) demonstrate that while popular media and political debates often portray gentrification as an integrative trend of geographic mobility, their research suggest that gentrifiers, in fact, “prefer already white neighborhoods; they are least attracted to black neighborhoods and see Asian and Latino neighborhoods as middling options” (Hwang 2014: 2).

Gentrification is thus very unlikely to lead to increased racial integration, and rather, can also be seen as a precursor to the larger problem of resegregation. As Chang (2016) notes, gentrification invokes a narrative that privileges the more affluent incomers in a gentrifying neighborhood as it does little to account for the existing residents who are displaced. When rents rise, and “beautification” and remodeling projects commence, residents who are forced to leave their neighborhoods are likewise squeezed out of the gentrification narrative. In effect, “Gentrification has no room for the question, ‘Where did the displaced go?’ Instead, the displaced join the disappeared” (Chang 2016: 72; Mock 2016). Hence, as Chang argues, while affluent whites repopulate portions of the inner city via gentrification –

areas that they abandoned in previous eras of white flight – people of color are pushed out into the suburbs, a process that constitutes a sort of reverse migration (Chang 2016; Mock 2016). As Chang argues, “Gentrification is key to understanding what happened to our cities at the turn of the millennium. But it is only half of the story. It is only the visible side of the larger problem: resegregation” (Chang 2016: 72; Mock 2016).

Hence, On April 23, 2010, as Mayor Villaraigosa stood in front of City Hall in downtown Los Angeles to inaugurate Ozomatli Day, and called attention to multiculturalism as a defining feature of the city’s social landscape, he did so within the context of a city still horribly fraught with socioeconomic inequality along racial lines and arguably embroiled in a process of resegregation. While Ozomatli’s musical amalgamations blend cultural forms from nearly all corners of the city with a seamlessness that speaks to a multicultural utopia, the city has yet to catch up with the hard work they and other youths inducted into the desegregation effort performed as they undid some of the racial hierarchies that also continued to define the city’s social landscape. In this sense, Mayor Villaraigosa’s engagement with Ozomatli’s particular breed of subversive colorblindness seems to have served to repackage their utopic project into something of a superficial celebration of multiculturalism that, like mainstream colorblindness, makes use of the ethos of the civil rights movement as a smokescreen to serve the interests of the perpetuation of white supremacy. Hence, while subversive colorblindness undoubtedly became an operative ideology that was able to challenge and undo some of the workings of white supremacy on a social

psychological level within the local intercultural musical scenes during the desegregation era in Los Angeles, it remains to be seen whether this ideology will come to disrupt the macrosociological phenomena of socioeconomic inequality and resegregation that continue to plague the city's hopes for the attainment of the type of multicultural utopia engaged by Ozomatli and their music. In short, only time will tell if the city will make good on the promise of Ozomalti Day – to engage subversive colorblindness as a means to challenge white supremacy and institutional racism within the city's public and private institutions to the same extent that mainstream colorblindness was able to shape the reactionary politics that rolled back many of the gains made during the Civil Rights Movement. If not, subversive colorblindness will merely continue to be repackaged as a celebratory multiculturalism that pays symbolic homage to the very racial utopia it actively disrupts and evades.

Chapter IV

“If Ever I Would Stop Thinking About Music and Politics”:

The Politics, Culture and Economy of Intercultural Music in Desegregation Era Los Angeles

Ports of Convergence: The Cultural Politics and Political Economy of the Spaces in Between

I don't know if you are ever going to ask me if LACES... if the magnet program was a big part of where I am now? Absolutely, man. I think it was the biggest part, because that's when the worlds opened up for me, dude. LACES was an airport man. You know? You could go anywhere, dude. You could go to the hood, which was a couple blocks away. You could go to the mansions a couple blocks away. Then you could go to Cheviot Hills and to Venice Beach. And then it's like you could go back home. Cuz that's the campus, man. It's crazy.

~Excerpt from Interview with Javier Mosley

It (Peace Pipe) was kind of like uh a port for LA, people coming to LA to familiarize themselves with the musicians, the music culture. Yeah so, a lot of people that I've met through playing there. A lot of magical jams, amazing... Impacted so many people... the vibe with who knows what possibilities... a lot of it was from people just getting together or having a space to get together like Peace Pipe. You know what I mean? And network. You know now people are... social networking. Back then it was like face-to-face, and it was a whole different thing. So many possibilities were available from that.

~Excerpt from Interview with Lonnie Marshall

The sentiments raised here via Javier Moseley's comparison of the intercultural schoolyard to an "airport" and Lonnie Marshall's comparison of the

intercultural performance space, Peace Pipe, to a “port” are useful metaphors moving forward. After all, what are ports but centers for cultural, political and economic convergence and exchange? For Javier, LACES magnet school served as something of an “epicenter” for the many neighborhoods that comprise Los Angeles, a sort of midpoint that housed a state-sanctioned experiment in bridging the many cultural forms and practices from neighborhoods throughout the city. As Javier notes about the location of LACES and his house a few blocks from the campus, “But you were in Mid City. Mid City is the middle of the city, where you get, I claim Mid City, man. That’s my hood. I’m right in the epicenter of everything. I’m talking cultural; I’m taking gangs; I’m talking music” (Mosley 2014).

When we explore such ports of convergence, and the role that music plays in facilitating intercultural encounters within these spaces, we are looking at two sites of cultural convergence. First is the music, an audible space where manipulations of sound beget musical inflections that historically become sonic signifiers of collective identities and cultural group membership. Within the context of intercultural music, this audible space then becomes a site where varying cultural groups converge, identities are negotiated and (trans)formed, and racialized categories of sameness and difference are both erected and obscured.

When we reflect upon desegregated schools and intercultural musical performance spaces, however, we are exploring the second of the two sites of cultural convergence that form the foci of this dissertation – physical spaces that, like the audible space occupied by music, push against the boundaries of a segregated Los

Angeles. Such spaces are not limited to the sensation of sound, however. They do, at times, include a soundtrack, but they are also physical locations where face-to-face cross-cultural encounters occur. As Lonnie Marshall notes above, “a lot of it was from people just getting together or having a space to get together like Peace Pipe. You know what I mean? And network. You know now people are...social networking. Back then it was like face-to-face, and it was a whole different thing. So many possibilities were available from that.” Taken together, these spaces tested the boundaries of a segregated city by providing ports, or midpoints, between rigidly divided racialized groups – spaces that made use of sound and social interaction to push the political project of desegregation beyond the confines of the schoolyard.

While chapter 2 demonstrated how bands and scenes that formed during the desegregation era made use of interpersonal networks established on desegregated schoolyards, and chapter 3 placed these scenes within the context of the rise of colorblind ideology in order to explore the, at times, more subversive ideological currents that became operative within these scenes, this chapter will explore the coevolutionary relationships between these scenes and the broader political and economic currents of the 80s and 90s. Just like ports, the bands and scenes that emerged during this era were centers of exchange, not only of interculturality, but of politics and commerce as well. Hence, while the people who comprised these scenes pushed against the social currents of segregation and white supremacy, they were also constrained by these phenomena, and neither the music nor the scenes could sustain themselves without capital, which placed them squarely within the rise of

neoliberalism, the political economy of white supremacy, and the racism of the music industry. In short, we move now into an investigation of intercultural music as a window into the cultural politics and political economy of interculturality during the desegregation era in Los Angeles, and how these intercultural (trans)formations framed both the emancipatory and exclusionary politics of race and racism in the present.

Segregation and Racism Within the Recording Industry: How a Culture of Segregation Produced an Economics of White Supremacy

During the post-civil rights/desegregation era, segregation in Los Angeles' institutions was addressed most directly within the city's school district, yet the culture of racial separatism was more broadly engrained throughout the city's public and private sectors. The recording industry, for example, maintained racially segregated departments well into the 90s. The story about the signing of Fishbone, as told by industry personnel, is a case in point. Additionally, as Fishbone and its individual members were fundamental to the formation of many of the intercultural scenes discussed herein, and were regular attendees and performers at the venues that housed these scenes (a fact demonstrated most directly in chapter 2), their story bears particular relevance to how the industry's racialized approach to marketing (or refusing to market) cross-cultural expressive culture would play a role in shaping the economic decisions and practices of the intercultural scenes discussed in this chapter.

While reminiscing about the signing and production of Fishbone's first album, David Kahne, Fishbone's producer at Colombia Records, notes:

To sign them, I had to do a demo first, so we were in there for about three hours, and it was just ripping. It was great. And I made a cassette... My boss said you have to take it to what they called at the time black music, and I never had really thought about that. I mean, what was going on in black music at the time was so far away from what Fishbone did (laughing), I didn't even know what to say. I didn't think about the music being so segregated even though the departments were segregated at Colombia. So I go over to the black music department. He comes in, and he's holding the cassette like he had picked up a piece of dog shit up off the sidewalk, and he goes like this, he hands it to me, he goes, "this sounds like rock music." And I said, "Yeah." And he goes, "well you could sign it over here (not in the black music department)." And I went, "Over here, ok. OK" (Metzler and Anderson 2010).

Kahne's recollection speaks to the racialized intersections of phenotype, sound and style that industry personnel used to determine where to place acts in the spectrum of racial segregation through which the industry was departmentalized at the time. After all, as far as the Colombia employee in the black music department and Kahne were concerned, the only thing "black" about Fishbone was their skin tone, not their sound, style or aesthetic. Despite this fact, Kahne's boss instructed him to take Fishbone's demo to the black music department – merely because their skin was black. Perhaps even more concerning, however, is the fact that the notion that Fishbone's sound and style were not at all rooted in black musical forms is inherently untrue, as many of the styles Fishbone had taken on (such as reggae, ska, rock, and funk) are historically rooted in Afro-Caribbean and African American cultural forms. The fact that Fishbone's phenotype, rather than their sound, was the only thing these industry personnel considered black about the band speaks to the racialization of genre and,

perhaps more problematically, the amnesia brought on by white appropriation – a larger problem that racial separatism and segregation propagates. That is, the fact that Fishbone had strayed so far from what the industry considered acceptable modes of black expression as they created a sound that industry personnel perceived to be “like rock music” speaks powerfully to how completely whites had appropriated the historically black style of rock, and how black musicians are forced to reinvent themselves in order to maintain marketability following the white appropriation of a black cultural form (a phenomenon explored thoroughly in chapter 3).

It truly is ironic that, by the 1980s, the industry, and society more generally, had come to consider rock to be white music – a fact illustrated above by the Columbia employee refusing to sign Fishbone in the black music department because they sounded to him “like rock music.” This was due to a thorough appropriation of the genre during the previous three decades by the white rockers in the 50s such as Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis (who were some of the first white rock musicians to riff on Blues and Gospel chord progressions and song forms), the so-called British Invasion of the 60s spearheaded by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, and the Classic rockers of the 70s such as Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath. By the 80s, as punk emerged as a sped up, zanier spin-off of rock, it was similarly perceived to be white music. Fishbone defied this racial logic as a black band with a style that refused to be categorized, so the ethos of non-conformity within the punk scene opened up *a* space (and possibly *the only* space) for Fishbone within this logic, albeit a somewhat tokenized place alongside the likes of the Rastafarian Punk band Bad

Brains. As Bob Forrest of Thelonious Monster notes, “You didn’t see black punk rockers. You didn’t see black rock bands playing in clubs, and all of a sudden, here’s everybody’s favorite band (Fishbone), and they’re black” (Metzler and Anderson 2010). The irony here is furthered by the fact that it is quite literally a misnomer to label Fishbone’s music punk rock. This may have been the only place to niche them within the industry’s racialized logic of the time, but the fact that texts and documentaries continue to refer to them as a punk band not only belittles their versatility, but also speaks to the very amnesia brought on by white appropriation discussed here. That is, because they were not playing what the industry considered black music, they were placed, by default, in the rock/punk rock genre, even as their sound was largely based in other African-American and Afro-Caribbean forms.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of black musicians in the 80s and 90s who wished to be considered for a record deal were relegated to playing what was considered black music at the time – styles such as a new, softer version of 60s R&B, 1980s funk, and hip hop. Obviously, Fishbone did not fit neatly into any of these narrowly pigeonholed categories. As Gwen Stefani of No Doubt, who was admittedly influenced by Angelo Moore, the lead singer of Fishbone, in her aesthetic and on-stage presence more than any other artist, notes, “It was at a crossroads in music in a way ‘cuz there was that whole hip hop/rap thing was about ready to take over, and here you have this crazy ska punk band with these like black guys with mohawks. I mean it was really like, just it didn’t fit in to anything” (Metzler and Anderson 2010). Fishbone, then, posed a threat to the racial order in the recording

industry at the time – not because they were playing white music, but rather, they stood as a reminder of where that music had actually come from – a reminder that threatened to disrupt the amnesia brought on by white appropriation. In so doing, they challenged the culture of white supremacy within the industry. The response from the industry was to hold this reminder at bay by placing them in the punk rock category, a default genre for nonconformists, outliers, and political dissidents. Labeling them as punk rock thus quelled the threat they posed to the industry's reliance on racialized genres, its marketing of white appropriations of black cultural forms, and its propagation of white supremacy.

Furthermore, while Fishbone and more mainstream black acts were pigeonholed into narrow and/or obscure genres, white musicians of the 80s and 90s were allowed to dabble in any style they pleased. For example, bands such as the Police and Sublime faced no resistance as they composed and performed styles that blended pop with Afro-Caribbean reggae, the Beastie Boys dropped two of the top 6 selling hip hop albums of the entire 1980s (one of which, *Licensed to Ill*, would go 9X Platinum, thus earning the title of the number one top selling hip hop album of the 1980s), Vanilla Ice tied with Puff Daddy for the top third selling hip hop album of the 1990's, Paul McCartney dropped the album *Graceland*, which incorporated the sounds of Lady Blacksmith Mombazo, a South African group whose singing is based in the vocal styles of isicathamiya and mbube, and white rockers carried on with song forms rooted in the pentatonic scale, indicative of gospel and blues, and chord progressions based upon variants of the classic I, IV, V, vi, ii, V, I progression of

twelve-bar blues (Willett 2011). Just like Jim Crow in the south and segregation throughout institutions in US society at large, then, the segregation in the music industry was not just about perpetuating the myth of racial purity and an ethos of racial separatism, but rather engaged these ideologies as a means of upholding white supremacy. And after all, upholding this *culture* of white supremacy was the means through which an *economic* structure that privileged whites could be maintained. In this sense (as will be discussed more thoroughly below), a culture of segregation produced an economics of white supremacy, and bands such as Fishbone, Living Colour (an all-black heavy rock band that formed in the 80s), and countless other acts that never got a record deal faced an uphill battle because they exposed a potential fragility in the mechanisms through which white supremacy reproduced itself, culturally and economically, via popular culture in the 80s and 90s.

Kendall, the guitarist for Fishbone, describes Fishbone's hard fought push against the segregationist tendencies in the industry, "We choose to play whatever musical styles we want because we want to. And, you know, we still have that black consciousness with us, and that's something that's gunna always be, you know? But, you know, the whole thing, you know, is just getting people to understand that you're not limited to a certain style" (Metzler and Anderson 2010). It is important to note here that not only were the boundaries of racialized expression policed more intensively for black musicians, but black musicians were also held to a code to which white musicians never had to adhere: The burden of representing, or as hip hoppers have called it, the burden of "keeping it real." As Kendall discusses

Fishbone's boundary-pushing, genre-defying mode of expression, he pauses to make sure it is known that Fishbone "still has that black consciousness" and "that's something that's always gonna be." This is indicative of a broader current in US society, one which holds the actions of black individuals as representatives of their entire race. People of color thus carry with them a burden of representing an entire people. White folks are never forced to take on such a burden, and their individual actions are rarely, if ever, taken as representations of all white people. Kendall thus feels the need to remind listeners that even as Fishbone defies common perceptions of acceptable modes of black expression, he still represents black people and black consciousness and "that's something that's always gonna be." Conversely, one would be hard-pressed to find an example of the Police or Sublime or Elvis (or any other white band making use of non-white cultural forms) pausing in an interview to make sure listeners knew that, despite their music's tendency to step outside of racialized modes of expression, they were nevertheless "keeping it real" to their white heritage. They have no burden of representing because white artists are not bound by racialized modes of expression to the same extent that people of color are. They are not forced to keep it real because they are not made to be spokespersons for their entire race. In fact, white artists are encouraged to push the envelope and appropriate any styles available as they create their sound and cut their records. The industry has a long history of profiting off such appropriations by white acts. Adhering to a long-standing tradition in American culture, then, the industry serves as yet another

example of how white liberation comes at the peril of communities of color. This is and has always been the purpose of segregation. This is the story of our nation.

The industry's marketing of hip hop culture via the commodification of graffiti art serves as another case in point. As Clinton Cameron, percussionist and drummer for section 8, notes:

Why are all the graffiti artists that made it, that were my friends at Santa Monica College, why is it that all of a sudden, boom, all the black guys that were in CBS (Can't Be Stopped – a tagging crew) and hanging out...like my boy Wayne, knew how to breakdance, knew rapping, knew graffiti...Design 9 was his name. But who was the first to get on like TV and all that other stuff?...All Jewish and white. I mean it's not like a racist thing on my point I don't think. I'm not trying to be anti-Semitic. I'm just saying like none of my black friends made it. They didn't get the gigs on TV. Maybe it's because they didn't want to compromise, cuz I remember when my (white) homie went to do a Skittles commercial, how he had to sit down with these guys with suits and ties, and he was uncomfortable with it, but he made money off the Skittles commercial, and he was able to represent a graffiti artist for a couple of TV shows...I respect these guys. They are an important part of the history of street art graffiti, right? But no blacks are in that history...The guys in suits and ties didn't want to sit down with anybody black...There was Adam, who played in Excel, in the punk band Excel, and Infectious Grooves, he did the artwork for that...And even Muir got a chance to do the Limp Biskit cover. Where are the black graffiti artists? Where are they? There was a handful of completely rebellious artistic artists that were just putting their shit on the line, doing the illegal thing just as much as these guys, and they didn't get an opportunity...It does have to do with culture. Think about it, even the New York artists back in the day, Zephyr. Zephyr was white... What I'm saying is that basically, a lot of white people take it for granted that shit is just going to be given to them. They have no idea that the Living Colours didn't just get up there, hop on stage as easily as like a lot of other groups (Cameron 2014).

Clinton's observations concerning the appropriation of graffiti art by white artists points to how the social structures of segregation and white supremacy are perpetuated within institutional frameworks on a social psychological level as they are produced and reproduced through the daily interactions of the people who

comprise those institutions. The cultures of these institutions are thus created and sustained through social interaction and repetition, and, in the case at hand, Eurocentric cultural repertoires such as “suits and ties” and whiteness are privileged. As Clinton notes, “it does have to do with culture.”

This phenomenon of the production and reproduction of social structures at a social psychological level via “recurrent patterns of interaction” is outlined by Cahill and Sandstrom as follows:

Although social structures often seem self-perpetuating, they are created and sustained by individuals who engage in recurrent patterns of interaction. Individuals may experience social structures as an external environment as powerfully constraining as the physical environment, but social structures are quite unlike the physical environment. Their power does not come from nature but from human definition and collective action. They are humanly created and re-created (2010: 281).

Indeed, segregation and white supremacy, as social structures, are so fundamental to the daily functions of US society that they take the unfortunate air of being part of the external and natural environment. In the not too distant past, even those boasting the objective cloak of the scientist have argued and theorized that racial differences and white supremacy derive from nature and biological differences (two of the arguably most famous examples being the cranial capacity experiments conducted by Samuel George Morton, M.D., which calculated cranial size by filling skulls with grains of rice and counting the number of grains, and then used this “data” to “justify” a racial hierarchy with Europeans on the top shelf, and, of course, the many pseudoscientific “findings” that laid the groundwork for the Eugenics movement of the early 1900s [Morton 1839]). This is precisely because institutionalized segregation had become

so thoroughly engrained within the US psyche and cultural practice that it had become naturalized as an ideology, all while being actively constructed through centuries of legal and cultural adherence to a doctrine of racial separatism, one aimed at producing and reproducing a hierarchy which privileged Eurocentric values, worldviews and belief systems. And these social structures are not only produced and reproduced on a macro level by bureaucracies and systems of power, but are also created and upheld at a social psychological, or microsociological, level by the individuals who comprise institutions such as the cultural industries in 1990s Los Angeles.

Clinton suggests as much with his observation that “the guys in suits and ties didn’t want to sit down with anybody black.” In this instance, a European fashion of dress, the suit and tie, becomes a sort of cultural repertoire that privileges Eurocentrism as it is used to determine who is granted and who is barred access to paying gigs in the cultural industry’s commodification and mass production of graffiti art, a cultural form that originated in the African-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Puerto Rican communities of New York in the 1970s. In Clinton’s account, the fact that suits and ties were not comfortable sitting down with black youth, and the fact that white graffiti artists were more comfortable with sitting down with them than were black graffiti artists – possibly because they already had the suit and tie within their cultural repertoire – became a factor that determined which “individuals” could “engage in recurrent patterns of interaction,” which, in turn, determined who got the paying gigs as graffiti artists. In so doing, these recurrent patterns of interaction

produced and reproduced the segregationist and appropriative tendencies of the cultural industry at the time. In this sense, a culture of segregation and white appropriation produced an economics of white supremacy (and, conversely, this economics of white supremacy further propagated a culture of segregation and white appropriation), one which was upheld on a social psychological level by the everyday interactions of the individuals who collectively formed the institutions of the cultural industries at the time.

Clinton furthers this point in his discussion of how segregation in the industry did not begin and end with the music and the talent. In the 90s, he worked as an intern at A&M Records. He discussed his experience not only with racial segregation in the assignment of tasks on the job, but also how this segregation of tasks begot racism in the workplace as black interns were relegated to positions with little room to grow their careers. As he notes,

So now, I'm working at A&M Records in the 90s while I'm...in Section 8, and I'm trippin' on these so-called hip kids that are gettin' intern jobs and shit like that. You basically, if you were an intern at A&M Records, during the 90s, you were sharpening pencils, and that's it. If you were white, you were able to like get behind the board, and you were able to get album credits. And I'm like going, "Really!?"...The thing that insulted me, that sealed the deal, that really fuckin' pissed me off was that...there was like one person that stuck up for all the black people that came in and were trying to intern and do all this other stuff, and they never let them advance. They never let them get their hands on the board. Never, and I was like, "Wow." You know? Like one guy was like, "Hey, I'm ready to quit. Cuz when I see how they are treating like this guy, and how they are treating that guy. I'm ready to quit. That's fucked up." Only letting in white kids, and they're basically treating the black guys like shit...until they quit, you know? And the interns quit. The black interns quit. It's like, "Fuck man. They won't let me on the board. They won't let me do this. They won't let me do that. They're giving these white kids credit for this and credit for that" (Cameron 2014).

Clinton's experience at A&M Records, then, demonstrates how the purpose of segregation within the industry was not just about maximizing profits through maintaining racialized marketing demographics, but was also plainly and simply about upholding a culture of white supremacy.

Negus (1999) explores how such cultural phenomena reproduce themselves within the music industry as he argues that record companies not only comprise an *industry that produces culture*, but they are also embodied and constrained within a *culture that produces an industry*. As he argues,

...the idea that *an industry produces culture* and *culture produces an industry*...frames my account of the music business and production of different genres, and is used to propose a particular way of thinking about those activities and spheres of life which are often artificially separated according to the categories of 'economics' and 'culture'...By using the term *industry produces culture* I am referring to how entertainment corporations set up structures of organization and institute distinct working practices to produce identifiable products, commodities and 'intellectual properties'...I have adopted the term *culture produces an industry* to stress that production does not take place simply 'within' a corporate environment structured according to the requirements of capitalist production or organizational formulae, but in relation to broader culture formations and practices that are within neither the control nor the understanding of the company (1999; 14-19).

Negus' account of the workings of cultural production within the music industry is useful to this discussion for three reasons. First, his theoretical framework aids in the understanding of the ways in which the bands and scenes discussed in the following sections coevolved with the very political and economic practices they effectively resisted, and how they both shaped and were shaped by the industry and the broader economic currents of their times. Second, it removes the "artificial" barrier that separates economics and culture, a restrictive paradigm that dominated much of the

early works in popular culture studies and placed far too much power in the efficacy of the music industry over cultural products, and third, in removing this barrier between economics and culture and exploring how these two facets of social formation function collectively, or coevolve, Negus sheds light on how industries are produced through the very cultures within which they function. In this sense, the record industry not only reified the perceived naturalness of racial segregation through the cultural products it produced and distributed via segregated departments, but was itself also produced through a culture of segregation and white supremacy. For these reasons, many of my interviewees found it impossible to compose their music, develop their sound, and/or establish scenes – which expressed a unique (trans)formation of self that defied, or at the very least did not privilege, an ideology of racial separatism – within the cultural context of the recording industry.

Crossing the Freeways/Crossing the Tracks: Desegregated Scenes as a Counter to a Segregated Industry

“That’s one of the things with Ozo...if there’s any kind of party line, or dogma, has always been the idea of inclusion, which kind of ties...into the whole bussing thing, tie into the whole idea of what LA means as this fucked up melting pot...divided by bridges and freeways, but one way that Ozo has always been described...is this quote that I said like fuckin’ over twenty years ago almost...Ozo’s the sound of you being stuck in traffic on Sunset Boulevard, and all the music from all the different cars mixing together. That’s Ozo, you know? That cacophony of rhythm and all kinds of shit. So, in a weird way, you know, our idea has always been of inclusion, and I even remember at our first rehearsals...at the Peace and Justice Center...the only thing that was definitely in consensus was, “We want to get people to dance.”

~ Ulises Bella

For all the reasons outlined in the previous section, an ethos of “inclusion” ran counter to the segregationist and racist practices of the recording industry. Therefore, during their formative years, intercultural ensembles such as Ozomatli established scenes and crafted their sounds in physical venues that often functioned outside of the context of nightclubs, radio plays, and recording studios that the industry traditionally used to shape and promote bands. It is hard to believe that these bands would have been able to develop the sounds that came to define their music under the prohibitive and segregationist conditions set forth by the recording industry at the time. Instead, intercultural ensembles crafted their sounds in venues that functioned autonomously in relation to the recording industry. The Peace and Justice Center, a venue in downtown Los Angeles where Ozomatli solidified as a band and began piecing together “all the music from all the different cars” to form their sound, is a case in point. Viesca (2000) describes the establishment of the Peace and Justice Center when Wil-Dog, Ozomatli’s bassist, won a building in a labor dispute with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and transformed it into a community center with the help of some of his former co-workers:

...Wil-Dog worked for the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, a federally funded jobs program set up in response to the 1992 insurrection (Oliver et al., 1993). In March, 1995, Wil-Dog, along with several others attempted to organize a union among the (mostly Latino) youth who worked in the Emergency Resources Unit of the Corps located in downtown. The Emergency Resources Unit trained and employed local inner-city youth at minimum wages with no benefits and offered few long term job prospects. At the same time, upper-level management received high wages and lavish benefits. As the young workers began protesting this discrepancy, the Corps management fired Carmelo Alvarez, Wil-Dog’s boss, and the Corps’ only Latino site director. Agency managers also shut down the Emergency Resources Unit’s downtown building. Wil-Dog joined with the other

members of his Corps unit to stage a takeover of the building and to mount a two-month sit-in. These actions were aimed at securing union representation, better wages, stable employment and the chance for advancement for those involved in the Corps... Those attempting to organize the youth – 30 workers in all – were fired. Negotiations, prompted by bad publicity for the Corps, did not bring about a union but did manage to secure access to the locked out downtown building for a period of twelve months. The activists quickly renamed the building the Peace and Justice Center and transformed it into a nonprofit community arts center (Viesca 2000: 483).

Functioning outside of the industry did not only result in a freedom of expression unhindered by boundaries of racialized genres aimed at cultivating marketing demographics and target audiences, but also brought with it a burden of self-financing (a fact that will be explored in depth in the following section). With no industry backing, such as industry sponsored advertising, promotion, merchandising and record sales, the Peace and Justice Center was forced to generate other sources of revenue in order to keep its doors open. In fact, many of the band's early gigs, through which Ozomatli cultivated its sound, were staged as fundraising events for the center. As Wil-Dog notes:

After the strike, we were given access to this new community center dedicated to youth and art. We had to raise money for the building, so I called all these musicians I knew. Ozomatli got together during the first five gigs. It was a jam thing where everyone's musical past came out. We never set out to play this style. It's just what everybody knew (Shuster 1998 [from Viesca 2000: 483]).

It is important to note here that, just as the desegregated schoolyard had become a site where segregation was denaturalized, and the interpersonal networks that became Ozomatli were forged (as demonstrated in the previous chapter), the center *also* became a site where, through musical composition, interculturality was further naturalized. In the same way that segregation had become naturalized through policy

and practice in certain contexts during previous generations, the desegregation generation began the work of naturalizing interculturality, and the formation of the Peace and Justice Center became a site where the practice of racial separatism became further destabilized through musical practices that adhered to a doctrine from which the industry shied: integration. And this was accomplished through an uncontrived subversive colorblindness, one which, as mentioned in chapter 3, took interculturality as a starting point, rather than a goal to achieve. Wil-Dog suggests as much as he notes, “It was a jam thing where everyone’s musical past came out. We never set out to play this style. It’s just what everybody knew.”

In an interview, Ulises describes another instance during which Ozomatli began to develop their sound at a rehearsal held at the Peace and Justice Center:

I even remember at our first rehearsals, you know, the whole story of The Peace and Justice Center and all that shit, but I remember like our first rehearsal was just like, “Well, what the fuck we gonna do?” Cut Chemist was on the floor with his turntables...and we were like, “Well, what are we going to play?”...Like, “Yo, we gotta get people dancing, man. That’s all that fuckin’ matters.” So then, boom, what does that mean? “Oh, well uh, I know this Cumbia rhythm...” And I totally remember ‘cuz it was like Cumbia, certain styles obviously, people had different schools, certain things I wasn’t hip to, you know, like “Oh shit, what’s that about?”...So I even remember like I knew what a Cumbia was but I remember, “Let’s play this Cumbia rhythm,” and Wil-Dog going like, “Well, what the fuck is that?” And he’s like, “Oh, it sounds like reggae to me. I’m just going to play this reggae bass line against it.” And of course, it fits perfect. It fits really well. Reggae and Cumbia fits really fuckin’ well...Emphasis on the upbeats...it’s a little different obviously, but for whatever reasons, those two musics and rhythms complement each other really easily, so that’s the beginning of Cumbia De Los Muertos. I remember like, “Oh shit,” this kind of like mixing of styles and sounds (Bella 2014).

Ulises’ recount speaks first to the way in which musical inflections that have become representative of cultural groups (in this case Afro-Caribbean reggae and cumbia,

which originated among the African population on the Caribbean coast of Colombia, but has manifested in various forms throughout Latin America) often bare stylistic similarities – or what Lipsitz (1990) refers to as “families of resemblance” – and thus allow music to become a powerful site of interculturality and intercultural exchange. However, pertinent to this discussion, Ulises account also demonstrates how, as Ozomalti began their innovative and transformative practice of blending musical forms from various cultural traditions into cohesive grooves, they did so within the context of a physical space that not only functioned autonomously from industry pressure to conform to racialized modes of expression, but was also founded through a labor dispute that pushed the boundaries of the political and economic practices of one of the city’s institutions. In this sense, this space adhered to a radical politics of (trans)formation that was not limited to challenging racial separatism, but rather positioned the political project of such (trans)formations along the intersections of race *and* class. In the case of the Peace and Justice Center, a sort of socialist takeover of a building owned and operated by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps became the premise for etching out a space that would allow youths to experiment with new forms of interculturality. This positioned the Center squarely at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and class, and thus extended the (trans)formative potential of this space beyond merely challenging racial separatism to include the enactment of cultural work aimed at abolishing unfair labor practices and class inequality.

To further this point, consider the mission statement of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps: “Our primary mission is to provide at-risk young adults and

school-aged youth with opportunities for success through job skills training, education and work experience with an emphasis on conservation and service projects that benefit the community” (Los Angeles Conservation Corps 2017). Here we have a federally funded (at the time) local institution dedicated to providing “at-risk” youth employment opportunities in order to help them avoid becoming disenfranchised from mainstream society. Yet, as noted above, during this time, the Corps offered these youth, “minimum wages with no benefits and offered few long term job prospects,” while “upper-level management received high wages and lavish benefits” (Viesca 2000). Thus, much like the at times contradictory practices of the desegregation effort of the LAUSD’s school board, wherein the workings of white supremacy slipped back into the framework of desegregation, the practice of labor exploitation and class warfare had slipped into the framework of a Conservation Corps whose mission was to counter these very socioeconomic currents. We can therefore understand the establishment of this intercultural scene, one which led to the solidification of Ozomatli, as a social movement/milieu that drew upon intercultural networks established within the state-sanctioned, institutionalized context of desegregated schools and pushed against not only the racist and segregationist practices of the recording industry, but also the questionable practices of a local institution that funneled “at-risk” youth into an exploitable labor pool to the benefit of upper-level management. This points to how the city’s public and private institutions simultaneously shaped and pushed against the (trans)formative potential of such scenes, and provided both a catalyst and a counter to the cultural work performed

within these spaces. Herein lies the complex, and at times contradictory, function of popular cultural forms and the institutions within which they are embodied. Formed within the context of institutional settings that both reify and challenge the status quo, popular culture embodies both the oppressive and the emancipatory – the regressive and the transformative. I am concerned here with the potential of popular cultural forms to enact emancipatory (trans)formations that function at a social psychological level, thus producing new senses of self capable of expanding upon existing notions of community and cultural belonging. For the reasons outlined above, the formation of Ozomatli and the scenes within which they solidified as a band, are a case in point.

It is also important to note here that many of my interviewees were raised in familial settings that engaged one form or another of political opposition, and that this type of familial influence was central to the establishment of these scenes as well. Consider, for example, Wil-Dog's upbringing and how this may have impacted his decision to initiate a labor dispute with the Conservation Corps that eventually led to the establishment of the Peace and Justice Center. As Dursten (2014) notes of Wil-Dog's involvement in the Conservation Corps labor dispute, "One of the most outspoken of the protesters was bass player Will 'Wil-Dog' Abers, a red-diaper baby...whose parents were members of the Revolutionary Communist Party" (1). Kun further establishes this direct relationship between Wil-Dog's family's political affiliations and the establishment of the Peace and Justice Center as he notes that, "Wil-Dog was raised by active members of the Revolutionary Communist Party and he knew a labor sham when he saw one" (From Nguyen 1998: 1).

Similarly, Ulises Bella, saxophonist and clarinetist for Ozomatli, recalls how his father's political leanings influenced his own political beliefs and, more specifically, his attitude toward authority at a young age when he attended John Burroughs Middle School's magnet program:

DW: Talk a little about how your family got here (to the US).

Ulises: My dad came via Canada. From Spain to Canada, or he went to a bunch of different places in Europe...and he quit school at a very early age and emigrated to France, and we're talking at the time, this is post Spanish Civil War, so there was a lot of like *heat* on the family I guess. 'Cuz they were on the losing side, you know? So, a lot of like Commies and Anarchists and you name it, like had to bounce. That particular (part of my) family was like affiliated with this anarchist trade union, and...Because my grandfather...they put him in this town that was basically like to keep an eye on him. Anyways, my dad left and went to France and I think went to Italy, and then I think probably went back to Spain, I'm not sure, but ended up in Canada, and then from Canada came to Los Angeles... (In Junior High) I remember too...already kind of like developing a...serious distaste for authority, and just like questioning the teacher a lot already.

DW: Was that 'cuz your dad was coming from like –

Ulises: For sure, for sure, for sure. And my pops was always just like, you know, fuck the US vibe. So you kind of naturally go into –

DW: Was he an anarchist? A communist?

Ulises: Definitely a lefty, but with anarchist leanings.

DW: Really? And he kind of raised you up to think about authority and power?

Ulises: Yeah, so...what happened in Spain (during the time Ulises' dad was growing up) was kind of like some golden era shit (for the anarchist movement)...It was almost their like..."Dude, you realize what happened in Spain? They took over cities. They did this. They were running societies without this (government)." You know, it's like almost romanticizing it... So, yeah, for sure. Definite lefty leanings. So I even remember like in Junior High, like, a history teacher telling me if I liked communism so much, why don't I move back to fuckin' Russia or some shit like that...And at that point,

dude, I was already not like standing for the pledge and shit like that (Bella 2014).

Much like the process through which interculturality became naturalized on the desegregated schoolyards, political ideologies and dissidence had also become naturalized for Ulises and Wil-Dog at a young age within their households. This leftist disposition that leveled a critical gaze at authority, and at US institutions and hierarchies more specifically, would become a fundamental philosophical tenet and guiding force through which Ozomatli would cohere as a unit. As Ulises notes:

Ulises: And I remember like one of our first gigs was like for the Revolutionary Communist Party and shit... We were like the house band for anybody who needed money. For a long time, dude. For a long time. Like, 'Oh the Zapatistas, oh this, oh that.' And I mean we were all down for it...

DW: Were you getting those gigs through radio stations? KPFK or –

Ulises: That was a lot of word of mouth. Because at the time, being at the Peace and Justice Center turned into like this squat/culture center/rehearsal/skate park, you name it... All types of like leftist causes or causes in general were like, you know, people would go through there, you know?... And a lot of cool bands came out of it, whether it was Quetzal or us, or, you know, you name it (Bella 2014).

Functioning outside of the context of the recording industry, Ozomalti was able to cultivate a unique (trans)formation of interculturality not possible in the industry's segregated departments of the time. While the industry stood as a hindrance to genre bending and racial integration, Ozomatli formed instead within the context of a scene housed in a physical venue that was ascertained through a protest against class inequality within one of the city's institutions, which then became a place of congregation for networks of anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian, and anti-hierarchical political dissidents. Such scenes were ripe with emancipatory identity

(trans)formations, and could only have coalesced in venues that functioned autonomously from the racist and segregationist tendencies of the recording industry at the time. Ozomatli thus shaped and was shaped by – or coevolved with – a scene that housed a social milieu wherein a diverse group of youth coalesced around the core tenets of inclusiveness, anti-class warfare, and political dissent. As such, this scene cultivated a framework for interculturality that would lend itself to the formation of Ozomalti, a band that would further the core tenets of this social milieu by disrupting the mainstream ideological currents of racial separatism and white supremacy through the performance of its music on a local, and later a national and international, stage.

Eventually, however, Ozomalti gained such a large grass roots following that the industry could no longer ignore the lucrative potential in commodifying their music. With this said, they signed their first self-titled album in 1998 with Almo Sounds, a small independent label, which was arguably not constrained to the same extent by the culture of segregation to which larger labels at the time adhered. It would not be until 2001 with the signing of their second album, “Street Signs” that the band would begin creating music within the cultural context of the larger label, Interscope, who by that time, had become a subsidiary of one of the Big Four music labels, Universal Music Group (Willett 2011). However, even after they had cut their first record with Almo Sounds and began to gain increasing notoriety among the general public, the segregationist ethos of broader industry circuits would still struggle with where to place Ozomatli’s music within a milieu of commerce

facilitated by racialized genres, a fact that made it nearly impossible for radio stations to provide a forum for the bilingual, interracial, and genre bending sound that Ozomatli had crafted at venues such as the Peace and Justice Center and Peace Pipe. As Ulises notes:

A lot of Spanish radio stations were into (the song Cumbia De Los Muertos), but they were bumming about the rap. This was the mid-'90s, before the Ricky Martins and Shakiras made it cool to be bilingual on the radio. Back then it didn't fly. Think about the handful of Spanish songs that did well on radio: "La Bamba," "Oye Como Va," it's that classic (expletive). The bilingual vibe used to be frowned upon (Baca 2014: 1).

In this sense, Ozomatli has remained something of a perpetual guest to the industry, and continues until the present to confound industry standards with music that refuses to be easily compartmentalized within restrictive paradigms such as racialized genres, an ironic fact considering they have won multiple Grammys and toured the world as Cultural Ambassadors for the US State Department under George W. Bush.

Like Ulises, Wil-Dog, and the formation of Ozomatli, Joey Derusha (of the Alef Project, which was a precursor to Abraham Inc., a funk/klezmer matchup featuring Fred Wesley of the James Brown Band; and Ancestry of Sound, an LA-based Afro-Cuban/ funk ensemble) also chose to compose his music within a context that functioned outside of the racist and segregationist tendencies of the music business and its marketing demographic schema. As he notes:

We...grew up around the time of the riots and saw music, basically, in some ways segregate people, which is, the opposite I think of what we thought of as music because when we were listening to Fishbone, and Ozomatli, Section 8, all these different things that were happening around Los Angeles, they were an integrative. They were all these different cultures coming together, making something that was greater that attracted all different kinds of people, and we all got together and danced, and it was a great scene. But we also saw (music

segregate people). I think a lot of it is that advertising and marketing is to blame...because they find demographics and try to appeal certain genres and target that (demographic)...So I always wanted to create music that was outside of the scope of a marketing demographic and, you know, that genuinely brings people together and creates a scene just by what's happening – the connections between the different cultures that can thrive and make something new (Derusha 2013).

Like Ulises' and Wil-Dog's anti-establishment and anti-capitalist leanings, Joey expresses a blatant disdain for the industry and thus attempts to distance himself and his music from what he perceives to be limiting and oppressive market forces. It is interesting to note, albeit not surprising, that, also like Ulises and Wild-Dog, Joey grew up in a family strongly committed to social justice and political dissent. Joey traced this tale of his family's lineage back to the Ukraine, where his great-grandmother's political opposition to the Czar forced her to flee her country and come to the US:

DW: Where did your family come from?

Joey: Yeah, it does inform what (I do with music). You know, on my Grandmother Tillie's side, my father's mother, um, her mother...was an activist in the Ukraine. It was a town called Zarvanytsya, or Veretinchine in Yiddish, and it was kind of near Moliev. And, um, she was caught influencing people to come to these meetings in the forest that were against the Czar...and she was kind of, even at 15 years old, a central figure in this. And she came from a family, like her mother (Tillie's grandmother)...she was set up for an arranged marriage when she was 15, and she refused and ran off into the forest. So she (Tillie's mother) had this feeling of what it meant to be a strong woman. Her mother was a strong woman...She (Tillie's mother)...had asked a police lieutenant's son to come to one of these meetings, and he told his father, and she was in big trouble, and there was I think, her father's barber had told her that, "look, they're going to send you to Siberia." And so the family took everything they had and put it together and just sent her off to America, by herself...and they already had enough people in New York at that time, so she came further in to Sioux City, Iowa. And so for that part of the country, they were, they formed...that (part of my) family became the center of a whole cultural hub...When they first came, they had

more religious cousins that they stayed with...(but) they were very progressive. In fact, they ended up being black listed during the McCarthy era – my whole family because of them...At that time, they didn't know all the problems in the Soviet Union. That was the Revolutionary period. Afterward, they still had that mind frame (Derusha 2013).

As Joey recounts, his family came to the US as political refugees and established a social network wherein they “became a center of a whole cultural hub.” In this sense, the ideological strain of political dissent within Joey’s family was coupled with a practice of social gathering, and the tradition of “meetings in the forest that were against the Czar” in the Ukraine was continued through his family’s establishment of a cultural hub in Sioux City Iowa. In addition, Joey recalls how this affinity for culture and politics nurtured by his grandmother’s family became a catalyst for his initial explorations into music.

Joey: My grandmother, she introduced me to music. She played me Paul Robeson and John Coltrane and Harry Belafonte.

DW: So she was your introduction to music?

Joey: Yeah, she really was...I remember that I had to do a report for school, and she said I should do it on Paul Robeson...I think it was like a 1st grade report. That was my first memory of looking into music (Derusha 2013).

Joey continues his narrative by describing how his family’s practices of social gathering, (which he traced back to the political gatherings in the Ukrainian forest), the formation of cultural hubs, and their affinity for music were furthered by his own parents in their community of Silverlake where Joey grew up during the 1970s and 80s, and 90s:

Joey: Also...my parents, we would have hootenannies at the house where people from different ethnicities, you know, cultural backgrounds would come

together...They would rotate different people's houses...and sometimes we would host them.

DW: Wow, how old were you when you sat in on one of those?

Joey: I remember that from day one...There was a community in the Echo Park/Silverlake area that was all about multiculturalism (Derusha 2013).

Following Joey's narrative from the Ukraine to Iowa City to Silverlake, we see how his family's engagement with political dissent not only formed the catalyst for social gathering and the establishment of "cultural hubs" within their communities, but also how such gatherings performed the social psychological work of naturalizing interculturality within the intimacy of a familial setting. As he notes above, his parents' practice of hosting and attending hootenannies in the Silverlake/Echo Park area of Los Angeles provided a physical space "where people from different ethnicities...cultural backgrounds would come together." Joey furthers this point of how deeply naturalized interculturality has become for him, on a social psychological level, as he notes, "It's a very strange experience for me to be in a place where everybody looks the same...I am so grateful that, to me, seeing all these different people of different colors was normal as a child." And, important to this discussion, music played a central (and centralizing) role in the multicultural spaces that Joey's family provided for him "from day one."

These spaces of culture, politics, and music that his family provided, then, functioned much like the desegregated schools Joey would attend later during his grade school years – as antecedents to the intercultural venues and musical forms that Joey would engage later in his life. That is, they naturalized interculturality to the

extent that venues like Peace Pipe, The Gas Light, and Sweetback's made sense to Joey when he encountered them as a teen, and he was thus able to make use of such spaces to carry out his commitment "to create music that was outside of the scope of a marketing demographic...that genuinely brings people together and creates a scene just by what's happening – the connections between the different cultures that can thrive and make something new."

Joey continues with a recollection of the jam sessions at Peace Pipe, and recalls how the loose structure of the venue allowed him to blend diverse cultural forms into cohesive amalgamations. As he recalls:

Those jam sessions, those were great, and they were a great way to kind of play with a group of people, you know...That's where I tried out spinning records. And it was an environment where you could try new things, and you weren't necessarily going to get like laughed out of there if you were doing something creative...So for me...I think I was mixing like John Coltrane and William Burroughs (laughing), and as long as I put some kind of beat in there, it was alright (Derusha 2013).

Like the Peace and Justice Center, Peace Pipe functioned off the grid so to speak. Economically, it received no funding from the industry whatsoever (be it from promoters, advertised performances by signed bands [although many well established acts and musicians performed unannounced at Peace Pipe's jam sessions], donations, merchandise sales, etc.), so it was not obliged to adhere to any externally imposed standards set by industry personnel, who, as outlined above, maintained a deep commitment to racialized marketing demographics and segregated departments. Peace Pipe thus maintained a devoted and diverse constituency of attendees from all over the city (and beyond). Additionally, it did not rely on third party promoters to

advertise the event, which placed it further beyond the confines of industry restraints.

In fact, Peace Pipe was largely known through word of mouth. As noted in a 1993 article in the *Los Angeles Times*:

Each week, throngs of young regulars, decked out in fashions ranging from hippie to homeboy, shake it on the tightly packed dance floor. They're here solely through word of mouth; Sweetback's distributes no flyers and doesn't run ads. In fact, most of the people here still call the club Peace Pipe, the name Camacho used six months earlier when he occupied Rodolpho's in Silver Lake (Ehrman: 1).

Despite the archetypal, or stereotypical, description of the diversity at Peace Pipe (“from hippie to homeboy”), Ehrman's point remains: That Peace Pipe's constituency was not limited to a singular genre or mode of racialized expression. This placed Peace Pipe at odds with the industry's investment in racialized departments, genres and marketing demographics.

Octavio Camacho, founder and promoter for Peace Pipe and saxophonist for the house band, Groovin High, furthers this point and goes as far as to credit Peace Pipe's success to its very ability to function autonomously from the industry. As he notes:

The thing that impressed me the most, the thing that I remember the most about the Peace Pipe is the fact that we made it kind of cool for teenagers, 'cuz, like I said, a lot of them were underage, we made it cool for kids who were teenagers still in high school to like music and be a part of something and connect to *something that was not marketing, that was not marketed to them...that was not in the mainstream*. And they embraced it. So when you went to Peace Pipe, you saw kids who were 16 years old, you know, and 17 years old along with people who were in their 20s dancing on the dance floor to some music from the 70s that's being chopped up by the turntables by, you know, by Chemist and...Marvin, right (*italics my emphasis*) (Camacho 2014)?

In this sense, Peace Pipe earned its popularity through the very devices that the industry sought to avoid in its attempts to boost sales by popularizing its own acts that had been strategically niched in racialized marketing demographics. That is, Peace Pipe resisted conventional modes of performance such as scripted performances, prescribed set times, and DJs spinning song cycles of top 40 tunes niched in racialized genres. “Hippies and homeboys” danced side by side to tunes that were not popular during the time, even obscure. Ehrman (1993) furthers this point in his *Times* article as he notes the way in which Peace Pipe’s DJs spun rare grooves, rather than hits, and how this differed from other dance clubs (if that is even a term to describe Peace Pipe) of the time. As he notes,

Something happens every Tuesday night when Sweetback's, a dance club, takes over Cosmo in Hollywood. It's called a groove. It's hard to describe, but you know it when you hear it. Or rather, feel it. It snakes through house-band Groovin' High's rendition of War's "Low Rider." The deejays dish it out in tunes by Sly Stone, Parliament, Freddie Hubbard, Gary Bartz, Brass Construction and countless artists from the early '70s who are so obscure you'd have to hunt the used record bins to find them (1).

Charlie Bean, a DJ who spun at Peace Pipe, adds to the uniqueness of Peace Pipe’s musical offerings as he notes:

“It's a chance to play the funkier records,” says Charlie Bean, who on other nights is a paid deejay at King King, Cosmo and many after-hours clubs. “You don't have to play the hits. We play, like, the deepest, rawest, rarest grooves and people still dig it. It's stuff you never get to play at other clubs because nobody will dance to it” (Ehrman 1993: 1).

Finally, it is important to note that, unlike the more mainstream approach of establishing performance spaces that functioned within the context of racialized niches and industry standards, Octavio relished in his ability, as founder and promoter

of Peace Pipe, to establish a venue that maintained a diverse constituency of regulars by providing a physical location that was accessible to people from all over the city. As he notes of the club's relocation to the Gas Light in off-strip Hollywood roughly nine months after its establishment in Silver Lake, "We found a place in the middle of Hollywood. You know, that's accessible for everyone to get to. All the busses ran there. This is before they had the trains in LA. All the busses ran through there, you could walk through anywhere, and all the busses ran twenty-four hours to get to that club, so it was like, you know, anybody can get there." In this sense, Peace Pipe stood apart from the ethos of the industry and more mainstream venues within the city as its founder and promoter leveled its vision and evaluated its success based upon its ability to disrupt the very segregationist practices that the industry upheld.

Alienated by the industry's adherence to segregated departments and racialized marketing demographics, then, many of my interviewees chose to express their (trans)formations of the self, which had been formed within the context of desegregation (and, oftentimes, familial settings that engaged political dissent) within bands and scenes that had formed autonomously from the market forces of the recording industry. These scenes operated quite differently than other scenes in LA at the time as they did not adhere to industry standards, were not obliged to external restraints imposed by third party promoters or other sources of funding, and provided a space for young people to explore creative improvisational modes of musical composition and dance. Additionally, these bands and scenes made use of rare

grooves and cultural amalgamations, which resonated with an intercultural politics that leveled a critical eye upon the establishment and the status quo. These spaces were thus ripe with opportunities for young people to further indulge their unique (trans)formations of self and engage an emancipatory politics on the stage and dance floor.

Although these bands and scenes may have functioned autonomously from the record industry, they nonetheless needed capital to sustain themselves, which meant they were still constrained by the broader economic and ideological currents of the 80s and 90s – currents marked by the rise of Reaganomics, neoliberalism, a decrease in public funding for social programs and resources, and an increased emphasis on individual responsibility in both public and private arenas. As these bands and scenes pushed back against the establishment, the institution and ideology of segregation, the fallout from late capitalism, and market forces produced through racialized marketing demographics, they were simultaneously constrained and enabled by these same phenomena. The next section explores how these bands and scenes were shaped by the broader ideological and economic currents of neoliberalism and rugged American individualism that came to define the social and political environment of the 1980s and 1990s – currents that, in many ways, continue to have political, economic, and ideological ramifications in the present.

Waffles and Weed: Neoliberalism as Both Hindrance and Catalyst to Intercultural Performance Spaces in Desegregation Era Los Angeles

Thus far, I have been couching in terms of “choice” my interviewees’ decisions to establish bands and scenes outside the context and conditions set by the recording industry. This was not a disingenuous analysis, but it was incomplete. Although many of my interviewees experienced such decisions as personal “choices” made in their effort to resist the segregationist constrictions put forth by the industry, major global economic shifts, which influenced cultural, political and ideological (trans)formations within US society and politics, were central to the conditions musicians faced in the establishment of intercultural bands and scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles. This is not to say that my interviewees were passive actors in the establishment of such bands and scenes – merely at the whim of global economic forces. Indeed, as outlined above, these scenes were engaged by political dissidents and anti-capitalists, and became hotbeds for emancipatory ideologies that resisted racialized musical practices and provided spaces for youths that were ripe with (trans)formations of the self. Furthermore, some of these spaces were established through direct political protest and social activism (as in the case of the Peace and Justice Center). With all this said, however, a purely microsociological approach based on the narrative recounts of musicians who formed these bands and scenes does not account for the macrosociological and macroeconomic processes that emerged during the 1970s and 80s, and how these processes played a role in determining the social conditions under which my interviewees made their day-to-day “choices.”

Much like Negus' account of the ways in which the music industry not only produces culture, but how culture also produces the music industry, the bands and scenes discussed above not only produced transformative cultural and economic systems via the establishment of intercultural performance spaces, but were also produced within the context of global and national cultural and economic systems that were, to use Negus' terms, "within neither the control nor the understanding" of the musicians and fans who comprised these scenes (Negus 1999: 19). In this sense, intercultural bands and scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles were not only constrained by the very cultural, political, and economic conditions that they actively resisted (and, in some cases, transcended). They were also constrained *and* enabled by economic and political conditions about which they were entirely, or relatively, unaware. In a broader sense, these bands and scenes *coevolved* with the political economic (trans)formations of their times.

Our starting point for this discussion, then, is what many economists refer to as the Long Downturn, a period in history that marked the end of the "golden age of capitalism" – an epoch spanning from the end of World War II through the early 1970s during which "advanced", capitalist economies of Europe, North America and Australasia" enjoyed "steady economic growth, rising standards of living and a relatively stable system of liberal democratic government" (Hesmondalgh 2007: 83). The Long Downturn brought this "golden age of capitalism" to a halt when it culminated in the global recession of 1974. There are several competing accounts as to what triggered the Long Downturn. Some scholars of late capitalism place an

emphasis on the working class' ability to consolidate power, which led to wage increases and a decline in profits (Brenner 1998), while others level their gaze at the rise of international financial movements and the maturation of Japanese and German manufacturing sectors, which in turn led to a crisis in production and overcapacity in the once dominant US manufacturing sector (Harvey 1989; Brenner 2000). Whatever the causes that triggered the Long Downturn, one thing is clear: Keynesian economics, which had been adopted by the US as the dominant paradigm of economic policy since the years following the Great Depression, and had placed an emphasis on economic growth through government funded work and jobs programs and other forms of government spending used to “supplement consumer spending whenever it was inadequate to sustain economic growth,” (Hesmondalgh 2007: 84) would be replaced by a new economic approach based upon a faith in the “invisible hand” of the “free market” – neoliberalism.

Harvey defines neoliberalism as, “a theory of economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (2005: 2). Additionally, “state intervention in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum,” only intervening insofar as the creation and preservation of “an institutional framework appropriate” to ensure the maintenance of neoliberal practices are concerned (Harvey 2005: 2). With a push away from state intervention in market forces, as well as a heavy emphasis placed upon private property rights and the

privatization of public services and public spaces (Klein 2000), neoliberalism birthed more than a new approach to economic practices, but rather ushered in, with renewed force, the centuries-old ideological emphasis on rugged American individualism. That is, neoliberalism shied away from state created markets such as social services and jobs programs and placed the burden of financial success upon individual entrepreneurship. This had the ideological and practical effect of shifting the burden of achieving class mobility away from a government supplemented/subsidized pursuit of the American dream, and toward that of the “pulling oneself up from the bootstraps” model of rugged American individualism. In short, from the perspective of neoliberalism, if someone fails to achieve financial success, or falls into poverty, this is an indication of personal failure, rather than an indication that the state has failed to provide a level playing field upon which every citizen has an equal chance to succeed. Indeed, the preexistence of such a level playing field is an assumption upon which neoliberalism and a faith in free market capitalist democracy rests.

Undoubtedly, when the Long Downturn culminated in the global fiscal collapse of 1974, long held policies and practices based in more leftist economic principles were called into question (indeed, even held at fault), and the bargaining power of groups such as labor unions and workers’ rights organizations – who relied on state intervention in existing markets in order to secure decent working conditions and wages for their members – was severely weakened (Hesmondalgh 2007). With many theorists going as far as to blame organized labor and unsustainable wages for a decline in profits and the economic conditions that led to the 1974 recession, many

policies were enacted to weaken the bargaining power and rank and file membership of labor unions (Brennan 2000; Hesmondalgh 2007). This led to a situation wherein labor union membership in the US declined drastically as union membership became more of a hindrance than a catalyst for securing employment. In fact, in the period between 1970 and 2000, the percentage of workers who were unionized in California declined from 30.5% in 1970 to 16.4% in 2000 (NPR 2015). Labor unions thus found themselves in disarray, which only served to further reinforce the perception of the incompetency of the left's ability to pull the nation out of recession, and paved the way for the rise to dominance of more right wing neoliberal economic and ideological principles.

Hence, beginning in the mid 70s, “employers and governments ensured a long-term reduction in real levels of pay,” and when this was not sufficient for the purposes of restoring profits, and in an attempt to “reflate Western economies,” “governments made permanent a set of anti-inflation strategies that had been tried in 1974-1975. Emergency cutbacks in public spending and the stripping away of regulation by democratically elected governments were promoted from emergency measures to permanent policy” (Hesmondalgh 2007: 85-86). Neoliberalism was further validated as status quo economic practice via the realms of academia and public policy when neoliberal economists won two Nobel prizes in economics in the mid 70s – first in 1974 when Friedrich August von Hayek won the award, and again in 1976 when Milton Friedman, the then present-day champion of Adam Smith's

“invisible hand” of the free market, was honored as the award’s recipient (Harvey 2005; Smith 1909-14).

In 1970, then, when Judge Gitelson ordered the desegregation of the LAUSD, the nation (and the globe) was on the verge of a devastating recession, one which would mark the end of the “relatively stable system of liberal democratic government” that had largely guided economic policy in the US since the postwar period, and would usher in an era of right wing and ultra-right wing neoliberal policies. Ironically, however, the country was on such a dramatic shift to the right, that neoliberal policies would soon become bipartisan, mainstream economic practice as they were adopted by politicians on the “left” such as Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton and Barak Obama (Klein 2016; West 2016). Cornel West goes as far as to suggest that the adoption of neoliberalism by the left is what made Trump’s election possible as his xenophobic scapegoating coupled with economic anxiety among the white working class successfully rallied his base. This is not a far-fetched analysis considering that the working class in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan, all swing states that went red in the 2016 election, were hit hard by neoliberal free trade agreements such as NAFTA that sent their jobs overseas. As West notes:

The monumental election of Trump was a desperate and xenophobic cry of human hearts for a way out from under the devastation of a disintegrating neoliberal order – a nostalgic return to an imaginary past of greatness... This lethal fusion of economic insecurity and cultural scapegoating brought neoliberalism to its knees... The abysmal failure of the Democratic party to speak to the arrested mobility and escalating poverty of working people unleashed a hate-filled populism and protectionism that threaten to tear apart the fragile fiber of what is left of US democracy (2016: 1).

In short, as the desegregation of the LAUSD was implemented, and my

interviewees began to attend desegregated schools, the world was caught in a global recession, and working class America was enduring its greatest period of instability since the Great Depression. The situation was exacerbated as the 80s wore on because the neoliberal policies that were instituted in an attempt to lift the nation out of this recession caused further harm to the working class. These policies worked well for corporations, and, from a production standpoint, the recession was momentarily relieved in the early 80s insofar as the health of an economy can be determined by profits and gross national production. However, this economic growth based on “trickle down” economics came at the expense of the middle and working classes as neoliberalism exacerbated the already tumultuous conditions triggered by the fiscal collapse of 1974. As a result of these policies, jobs were lost overseas as corporations took advantage of the deregulation written into law through free trade agreements that allowed businesses to outsource manufacturing and labor to countries with cheaper labor pools and minimal environmental regulations; wages were slashed for those jobs that were retained in the US; public services such as health care and education became increasingly privatized and more difficult to afford; and the middle class all but disappeared as the accumulation of wealth steadily trickled up to the richest 1% of the nation.

The effect of neoliberalism was felt by the cultural industries in a myriad of unique and specific ways. First, as US companies shifted away from manufacturing, they joined corporations from many other industrialized countries in this trend and instead began investing in the service sector, of which the cultural industries were a

part. Additionally, companies that had traditionally invested in manufacturing and utility works such as Sony out of Japan, Bertelsmann out of Germany, Vivendi out of France and General Electric in the US began investing heavily in various sectors of the cultural industries. Thus, companies that had reaped massive profits from manufacturing and utility works during the “golden age of capitalism” began to take advantage of various industry deregulatory policies as they invested heavily in research and development in the cultural industries (Hesmondalgh 2007). As a result, new forms of electronic goods became available, and, important to this discussion, new forms of do-it-yourself recording technologies became available to musicians (this is discussed at length below). Additionally, the recording industry was directly impacted as these foreign companies began buying in, and becoming major players in, an industry previously dominated by US companies. The end result was the establishment of four major players, known as the Big Four, that came to dominate the recording industry and account for up to 80% of sales during the 1980s and 1990s. These four companies formed many mergers and thus changed names over the years, but mainly consisted of five entities: Sony, Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG), Universal Music Group, Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI) and Warner Music Group.

Although Universal Music Group, Sony BMG, EMI and Warner were known as the Big Four, they were not at the top of this industry’s family tree. EMI was owned by the British company, Terra Firma Capital Partners; Universal Music Group was owned by the French Company, Vivendi SA; Sony BMG was a joint venture

owned equally by Sony Music, a subsidiary of the Japanese company, Sony Corporation, and Bertelsmann Music Group, a subsidiary of the German company, Bertelsmann AG; and Warner's ownership was shared by the New York based company, Warner Music Group, and private shareholders via the New York Stock Exchange (Willett 2011). Hence, the restructuring of the industry that occurred in the 1980s with the rise of neoliberalism meant that an industry once dominated exclusively by US companies was well on its way to being owned almost entirely by foreign companies based in Japan, Germany, France and England. All of this points to the increasing globalization of the music industry that neoliberalism initiated, which had a particular impact on the economy of Los Angeles as the city was home to many of the major recording studios and bands that the industry promoted. The 80s thus ushered in an era of uncertainty for the recording industry, a sector of the service economy that would face increasing instability as the creation of the MP3 audio file and file sharing sites, followed by streaming services, would continue to force players in the industry to initiate complete overhauls of their business models.

These three facets of neoliberalism – the internationalization of the recording industry, a heavy shift toward investment in the cultural industries by both manufacturing and service-oriented corporations, and the introduction of “free trade” agreements that lifted tariffs and thus lowered the cost of imported electronic goods – further disturbed the relative stability that the recording industry had enjoyed for decades prior. With the rise of pirating via tape cassette recordings as well as the invention of the 4-track tape cassette deck, which allowed bands to create 4-track

demos in their garages and basements without any industry involvement, musicians and entrepreneurs unaffiliated with the industry were able to cheaply reproduce, and in some cases redistribute, industry products and to skirt industry involvement in the production of their own music. As Nouka from the hip hop duo, The Nonce (part of the Good Life/Project Blowed collective from the Leimert Park area), notes of the prevalence of mix tape culture in the 1980s hip hop scene in Los Angeles, “I used to sell mix tapes, but now I’m an MC. I got rhymes and beats. I used to rock them tapes” (The Nonce 1995). Thus, at venues across LA including Peace Pipe, The Peace and Justice Center, Project Blowed (underground hip hop event at the venue, the Good Life, in Leimert Park), Mamas Pajamas (a thrift store that allowed bands to perform there in the evening), Al’s Bar in downtown, the Natural Fudge Company (a restaurant in East Hollywood that hosted all-age musical performances on the weekends), and many others, the sale of mix tapes and original home recordings supplemented musicians’ incomes as they sought to express cultural forms and sensibilities uninhibited by the segregationist and/or otherwise exclusionary practices of the industry at the time. In short, this technological form gave rise to a mix tape culture that allowed bands that did not fit neatly into the racialized genres and marketing demographics maintained by the industry at the time to produce and distribute new and innovative forms of music with full creative right over their compositions.

Furthermore, this rise of do-it-yourself technology happened in conjunction with a dramatic drop in sales from the recording industry at the dawning of the 1980s.

As Gronow notes, in the United States the units sold of vinyl and cassette tapes declined 10.4% from 1978 to 1979 in the United States, which comprised a sales drop of 11.0% of all recording sales (1983). Thus, neoliberalism offered a dual opportunity for those musicians, such as my interviewees, who wished to do their thing outside of the context of the conventional industry approach to the recording, promotion and distribution of musical acts during the 80s and 90s: It weakened the power of the recording industry, particularly US based companies, and it made do-it-yourself recording equipment and cassette tapes easily affordable, thus allowing musical ensembles to easily and cheaply produce, reproduce and distribute their own cultural products. There is an irony here in that scenes that pushed back against the racism of the industry, and were composed, in part, of political dissidents, anti-capitalists, and other members whose ethos challenged the status quo of the late capitalist culture and economy of the US, were at once harmed by the overall decline in wages brought on by neoliberalism, but were also empowered and enabled by a global return to the ethos of free market capitalism via neoliberal policies that weakened the monopoly that US companies had on recorded music and made home recording equipment cheap enough for bands within these scenes to produce and distribute their music outside of the industry's established market circuits.

All of this, however, should not detract from the increasing economic and financial burden that neoliberal policies placed upon working class Los Angeles at large, and the bands and scenes discussed here more specifically, nor those musicians who are not discussed here but who "chose" similarly to operate outside the context

of the recording industry. First, and as previously noted, neoliberalism ushered in a powerful political push to privatize the public sector and weaken labor power by lowering workers' wages, all in an effort to raise profits and lift the global economy out of recession. Indeed, this is precisely why even the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which at the time was a federally funded jobs program whose mission it was "to provide at-risk young adults and school-aged youth with opportunities for success through job skills training, education and work experience" got wrapped up in a labor dispute with soon-to-be members of Ozomatli (Los Angeles Conservation Corps 2017; Viesca 2000). As the Corps decreased pay for its employees while giving "lavish" benefits to those with administrative positions, it had begun to function based upon the principles of a business model, rather than that of a public institution. This privatization of a public institution is an example of one of the trademark effects of the implementation of neoliberal economic policies.

Second, with this push toward weakening labor power and reducing workers' wages, politicians and policy makers who championed neoliberal principles aimed their sights at weakening the bargaining power and rank and file membership of labor unions. As previously mentioned, in California, labor union membership declined drastically during the desegregation era. In 1970, 30.5% of all workers in California were unionized. By 2000, this number was nearly cut in half as only 16.4% of workers in the state were union members. Hence, as opposed to the portrait of music scenes in postwar Los Angeles painted by Macias (2008), wherein musicians who were largely unionized performed in both integrated and segregated performance

spaces, none of the musicians who I interviewed for this project were members of a music labor union in Los Angeles, and the American Federation of Musicians Local 47 (aka The Musicians Union of Hollywood) was not mentioned once during a single interview that I conducted. This points to the drastic decline in union membership and to the weakening of labor power faced by musicians in desegregation era Los Angeles. The end result was musicians' inability to obtain (and retain) decent paying gigs through union bargains that drew into law mechanisms of government regulation aimed at enacting fair labor practices for musicians – a standard from which musicians benefited, albeit not equitably across lines of race and gender, during previous eras in the city's history (Macias 2008).

The actual impact of this decline in the musicians union membership upon the establishment of intercultural scenes is debatable, however. On the one hand, for much of the American Federation of Musicians' (AFM) history, the Los Angeles chapter operated segregated locals. The Local 47 was restricted to white musicians, while the Local 767 was the all-black local chapter of the AFM. As Marl Young, a 2008 retiree from the Board of Directors of the Local 47 notes, "Segregation was a way of life...Nobody thought too much about it at the time. It was taken for granted as just being the way things were" (Rapka 2009:1). Again, we see how segregation had become naturalized within US culture prior to the desegregation era, even taken for granted. Music unions were no exception, and thus became cultural and economic entities that performed the contradictory cultural work of, on the one hand, staving off social inequality by fighting for workers' rights, and on the other, reinscribing the

mechanisms through which racial segregation was propagated by operating segregated local chapters. Additionally, the unions upheld white supremacy within Los Angeles' musical performance spaces as the higher paying gigs were largely reserved for white musicians (and those Latinos who were able to join the white musicians union), while blacks were mostly allowed access to the lower wage gigs within the city (Macias 2008). As Macias notes:

Membership (in the AFM) certainly had its privileges, but these financial rewards rested on an apartheid architecture of locals that was common in every American city except Detroit and New York... African American Angeleno jazz musicians like Buddy Collette understood all too well the relationship between race and remuneration, for "the fact remained that Local 767 was treated as a subsidiary. All the work came into the white Local" (2008: 42).

Furthermore, even when black musicians in the Local 767 gained access to the same gigs as the white musicians in the Local 47, "black musicians in Los Angeles were paid about one-fifth of what white musicians made" (Macias 2008: 43). In this sense, one could argue that the decline in union membership, which was arguably reflected in the fact that my interviewees were not affiliated with the Los Angeles local chapter of the AFM, actually functioned as a catalyst for their ability to establish integrated scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles.

On the other hand, although the union had engaged historical practices of racial segregation and inequitable distribution of resources to its members along racial lines, the Los Angeles local chapters of the AFM were one of the first institutions to desegregate within the city. In 1953, the two segregated chapters of the Los Angeles AFM, Locals 47 and 767, merged into a single integrated chapter, thus

retaining the Local 47 and dissolving the Local 767. Although it is not clear whether this integrated amalgamation of the two local chapters actually helped to alleviate racial discrimination among the labor pool of musicians in Los Angeles, this was nonetheless a phenomenal act for a union, or any institution, in pre-civil rights Los Angeles, and undoubtedly served to perform the cultural work of denaturalizing the institution and ideology of racial segregation within the city to some degree. As

Rapka notes:

After years of dedication and hard work, the first merger of black and white Locals took place in 1953 in Los Angeles when Local 767 amalgamated with Local 47. In the pre-civil rights era of the early 1950s, this was an extraordinary feat. Marl Young wrote the amalgamation proposal that took effect April 1, 1953, forever eradicating racial segregation from the musicians union of Los Angeles. This historic merger set the precedent for other Locals throughout the nation to follow suit and end segregation within the entire AFM (2009:1).

In this sense, there is room to argue that the dissolution of labor power for musicians in desegregation era Los Angeles actually placed a further burden upon musicians to establish integrated scenes as they became disenfranchised from a union that had, to some degree, led the charge toward racial integration in Los Angeles years before the Civil Rights Movement had even begun.

Furthermore, it is debatable whether, given the chance, my interviewees would have joined a labor union at all considering their efforts to establish and perform at scenes that functioned outside of traditional and mainstream economic networks. Indeed, the very fact that the musicians I interviewed established self-sufficient scenes that took on the entire spectrum of the division of labor within performance spaces (a fact exemplified by the story of the Peace and Justice Center

discussed below), was, in itself, exemplary of neoliberalism's push toward individual responsibility. The scenes discussed herein, then, may arguably have constituted one of the many non-unionized performance spaces that emerged in conjunction with declining union membership. That is, these scenes may have never even emerged if the musicians that performed within them had sought more traditional gigs ascertained via union membership. Hence, there is room to argue that neoliberalism not only pushed musicians out of rank and file union membership as it weakened the bargaining power of labor unions in general, but also gave rise to an ethos of personal responsibility, which influenced my interviewees' "decisions" to establish self-sufficient scenes that, in effect, pulled themselves up from the bootstraps. Simply "choosing" to go it alone, then, rather than seeking union backing and membership may very well account for my interviewees' lack of unionization.

This speaks to the broader effect that the rise of neoliberalism had upon these scenes. In putting aside this debate concerning the real effects of the decline in labor union power and membership upon my interviewees and their establishment of intercultural scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles, one thing becomes clear: Without a union, musicians were inducted into one of the major ideological tenets of neoliberalism – rugged individualism. The emphasis on the ideological tenet of rugged individualism, which neoliberalism helped interject into a once Keynesian economic structure, did not begin and end with the decline in labor union power and membership, but instead pervaded every aspect of economic restructuring. Thus, the 1980s ushered in an era during which many musicians found the entire burden of

financing bands, gigs and scenes placed upon them as individuals. They not only played the actual sets at performance spaces, but they also served as doorpersons (or presale distributor of tickets), promoters, equipment grips, sound engineers, and in some instances (as will be discussed below), they even served as cooks and distributors of illicit substances at the music venues where they performed.

One of the most poignant examples of the shifting of promotional and ticket sales duties onto the musicians themselves occurred with the rise of an economic strategy that would later be adopted by many of the most well know clubs in Los Angeles: “pay-to-play.” In the simplest of terms, pay-to-play means that bands pay a venue in order to play a set in their facility. However, the pay-to play business model has been thinly veiled in several forms, most commonly in the band’s responsibility to presell a predetermined number of tickets prior to the gig. In some instances of ticket presales, bands lose money, while in others, bands sell tickets for more than they bought them in order to make back the money they spent on the tickets or to reap a profit. Still in other instances, bands get more tickets from the venue or promoter of the event than they are required to sell, and are allowed to keep up to 100% of the “profits” from tickets they sell beyond the amount agreed upon in the contract.

Whatever the arrangement, pay-to-play has become such an unpopular business model among Los Angeles musicians that it has come to connote an exploitative business practice within the LA music scene. For this reason, promoters, bookers and venue managers who use the presales business model have refused to acknowledge it as a pay-to-play policy. Celina Denkins, senior booking agent at the

Whisky A Go-Go in 2010, admits that the Whisky A Go-Go uses a presale ticket policy but argues that, “The Whisky A Go-Go has never been a pay-to-play venue. We have never asked for any money up front from a band's pocket in order for them to perform” (Bodine-Fischer 2010:1). Sean Healey, a third party “promoter,” who, in actuality, does little to “promote” the gigs that his company, Sean Healey Presents, hosts, but rather serves as a third party liaison between bands and venues, argues that ticket presales are only pay-to-play if the band fails to sell the amount of tickets agreed upon in the contract. As he notes, “when bands complain about the (Sunset) Strip being pay-to-play, what they really mean is that a band was issued tickets and did not sell the amount they agreed to. They in turn 'paid to play.' We have been using advance ticket sales for more than 10 years. Our contracts state clearly, 'We are strongly against pay-to-play: If you cannot sell the tickets, then don't take the gig'" (Bodine-Fischer 2010: 1). Conversely, Tod Junker of the metal/punk band Die Fast provides a succinct and typical retort from musicians when bookers and promoters attempt to distinguish between presales and pay-to-play: "Bullshit!...don't fucking lie about what you're doing. If I give you money before I play, that's pay-to-play, I don't care if it's tickets or drinks” (Bodine-Fischer 2010: 1). Whether or not the subtle differences between pay-to-play and ticket presales is worthy of acknowledgement, one thing is certain: Ticket presales and all other forms of pay-to-play fell in line with neoliberalism’s emphasis on individual responsibility as it shifted the burden of promotion and ticket sales away from venues and promoters and onto the musicians themselves.

Pay-to-play practices were first instituted on the Sunset Strip during the early years of the desegregation era, squarely within the rise of neoliberal economics. Denkins traces the pay-to-play practices at the Whiskey, “back to the '80s when the owner, Mario Maglieri, [started] the advance-ticket-sale requirement [and] instituted presales” (Bodine-Fischer 2010: 3). Beyond her refusal to acknowledge that presales are a pay-to-play policy, Denkins further defends the practice by attributing it to the Whiskey’s tradition of promoting local artists. As she notes of the Whiskey, “...we have always been a venue who has supported local artists and encouraged local artists to reach out themselves for fan support” (Bodine-Fischer 2010: 4). Of course, established acts that venues can count upon to bring a crowd are not held to the pay-to-play policy, but this does little to help musicians and bands that are trying to make a name for themselves and establish a scene and/or a following. In reality, this shifting of promotional duties and ticket sales onto the musicians, a task that Denkins reframes as the nightclubs’ benevolent gesture of encouraging “local artists to reach out themselves for fan support,” displaces so many sectors of the division of labor involved in the musical performance industry onto the musicians themselves that many simply become overwhelmed with the duties and choose other venues to play their gigs. As Loana dP Valencia, vocalist for Dia De Los Muertos and Dreams of Damnation, remarks about the burden musicians endure in play-to-play economics, “Keep in mind you are not the only local band on the bill selling tickets... It becomes a second job with little in return, so bands get frustrated and give up on that side of town” (Bodine-Fischer 2010: 3). In addition to displacing nearly every sector of the

division of labor onto musicians, pay-to-play economics lines the pockets of club owners and third party promoters through capital they receive from the musicians themselves. In a bizarre twist of neoliberal economics, then, musicians become consumers of their own products, while club owners and third party promoters reap the profits.

A further hindrance that ticket presales and pay-to-play placed upon musicians during the desegregation era was that these practices erected an economic structure that was uncondusive to the establishment of scenes. In pay-to-play, there is no cohesive lineup of bands, nor a crafted theme or ethos that determines which bands will play at a venue on a given evening. The *only* requisite to play is the ability to pay a certain amount of money for a slotted set time. Thus, on a given evening, crowds trickle in and out to see the band from whom they bought a ticket, and rarely arrive to see an earlier act or stay to see the next. Rather than creating a scene, a cohesive experience, or unifying in any way the performers and audience with a musical ethos, pay-to-play economics creates a somewhat chaotic “revolving door” environment for fans who only show up to see a 30-minute or hour-long set, and who thus come and go throughout the evening with great frequency. As Bodine-Fischer notes, “Another major problem with presale dates is that the lineup becomes an incoherent mash-up of whatever acts could come up with the money through presales, rather than bands regular fans might enjoy seeing” (2010: 3). Bodine Fischer furthers this point by citing Josh Newell, a musician and sound engineer, who notes, “You don't go to a club anymore because you know they're going to have good music on a

Friday night. You go specifically because your friends are playing a 20-minute set that they're paying \$1,200 to do. And you show up just to see their set and then leave because the other bands are on the bill because they were willing to fork out the cash to play as well” (2010: 3).

In my own experience of doing gigs with intercultural ensembles based on a presale economics model during the 90s and early 2000s in Los Angeles, we were able to earn money if we could sell three times the amount of tickets that the venue or promoter required in the contract, but we were often followed and preceded by bands with whom we shared no commonalities, or we were quickly ushered off the stage by venue managers and sound engineers as they transformed the rest of the evening into some event that couldn't be further removed from what we were aspiring to do with music - such as corporate promotional parties for vodka companies featuring DJs spinning Top 40 tunes, or a private event for music industry personnel to which neither our band nor our fans were invited. Clubs where we played that used a pay-to-play economic structure included the House of Blues, the Key Club, the Cat Club, the Martini Lounge, and the Viper Room. The type of environment created in these clubs through pay-to-play economics made it completely impossible to use such venues to establish intercultural scenes, so many musicians, including interviewees for this project as well as members of my own bands, took their talents to venues that operated under a different economic structure, or, as will be discussed at length below, they became entrepreneurs in their own right as they created scenes from scratch in businesses friendly to the idea of loaning (or donating) their spaces to musicians for

this purpose. As Joey Derusha notes, “So I always wanted to create music that was outside of the scope of a marketing demographic and, you know, that genuinely brings people together and *creates a scene* just by what’s happening – the connections between the different cultures that can thrive and make something new (italics are my emphasis)” (2013). Hence, as pay-to-play economies became more common throughout the 80s and into the 90s, the venues that operated based upon this economic model became sites completely at odds with the endeavors of Joey and other like-minded musicians who wished to establish scenes, not just perform tunes. In response, intercultural music scenes moved away from the glitz of Sunset Strip Hollywood, thus further removing themselves from the grips of the recording industry. As Loana dP Valencia argues, “bands get frustrated and give up on that side of town” (Bodine-Fischer 2010: 3).

Thwarted by economic models that required musicians to take on nearly the entire spectrum of the division of labor involved in the production of musical performances, and by venues that were in no way conducive to the establishment of coherent musical scenes, many of my interviewees not only skirted the segregationist tendencies of the music industry, but also avoided popular nightclubs throughout the city as they aimed to establish inclusive music scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles. This is the political-economic environment my interviewees had to navigate as they made their way from desegregated schoolyards to the stage. It was an era marked by neoliberalism’s push toward hyper-individualism, and musicians who were striving to become established within a network of like-minded people found

themselves alienated from mainstream economic channels of musical performance, musicians unions, third party promoters, and the recording industry – all of which were institutions that had provided invaluable resources for up-and-coming musicians and bands during previous eras of Los Angeles’ history. Musicians during this era thus found themselves playing the role not only of musician, but also that of promoter, sound engineer, grip labor, DJ, master of ceremony, doorperson, loaner and renter of sound equipment, and a variety of other roles required of musical performances. Already occupying nearly every rung on the division of labor in their performance spaces within the structures of neoliberal and pay-to-play economies, the logical next step for many of my interviewees was to remove the middle person by establishing their own scenes completely outside the context of the industry and all other mainstream networks of music performance throughout the city. This was not solely the case with intercultural ensembles, but other forms of music that the industry had neglected as well, such as punk rock and underground hip hop. Collectively, then, the efforts of such musicians who skirted traditional networks and economic practices of mainstream musical spaces, and instead took on the entire spectrum of the division of labor in order to establish their own scenes, gave rise to a series of autonomous musical scenes and spaces also known as “the underground.”

The impact of neoliberalism on the economics of musical performance during 1980s Los Angeles, then, can be seen not only in the hyper-specialization of 1-hour sets of segregated acts and in the alienation of up-and-coming acts from mainstream economic networks for performing musicians, but also in the rise of the many

“underground” musical scenes that began to rapidly populate Los Angeles during the desegregation era. In this sense, neoliberal economics not only served as a hindrance to musicians seeking financial stability as it blocked access to pre-existing channels of employment that had aided up-and-coming musicians during previous eras of the city’s history, but it also, albeit inadvertently, served as a catalyst for the rise of “the underground.” That is, neoliberalism fomented a capitalist logic through which musicians “chose” to become entrepreneurs in their own right as alienation from mainstream networks of musical performance pushed them to establish self-sufficient scenes that functioned autonomously from the music industry and mainstream performance spaces – spaces which had become constricted by economic policies uncondusive to the establishment of such scenes.

Among the scenes that were established apart from mainstream economic networks of musical performance in the city, wherein musicians took on the entire division of labor within the venue, were the Peace and Justice Center and Peace Pipe. In the case of the Peace and Justice Center, as previously mentioned, musicians came together to play sets, not for profit, but to fundraise in order to maintain the actual facility they inhabited. In this sense, the musicians were not only the promoters, performers, and sound engineers of the venue, but they were also responsible for general maintenance of the facility. Additionally, as previously discussed, because The Peace and Justice Center functioned outside the context of the industry and mainstream nightclubs, this space also became a place of gathering and fundraising

for causes taken up by political dissidents, thus furthering the irony of neoliberalism's role in facilitating the formation of anti-capitalist networks and community centers.

Peace Pipe, on the other hand, functioned a bit more like a traditional performance venue in that it was not set in a community center that had been established in a building won through a labor dispute with a local institution, but rather was located first at the restaurant, Rodolpho's, in Silverlake, and then at Cosmos Bar (AKA the Gas Light) in (off Strip) Hollywood. A detailed account of the establishment of Peace Pipe is provided in chapter 2, which outlines the ways in which Octavio Camacho, the founder of Peace Pipe and saxophonist for the house band Groovin' High, made use of networks he had established on desegregated schoolyards to bring together the performers at the venue. Pertinent to this discussion, however, is the multiple roles taken on by Octavio as he established Peace Pipe as a self-sufficient intercultural scene that functioned autonomously from the industry.

Octavio's vision for Peace Pipe was inspired by the work he had done at other open mic venues in the city such as King King and the Variety Arts Center. Already well versed in a variety of trades involved in the production of musical performance such as grip labor, in which he had been trained at Hollywood High's magnet school for performing arts, and sound engineering, which he had learned through his work at the two aforementioned clubs, Octavio decided to carve out a home for his band Groovin' High at a venue of his own design. Toward this end, he reached out to the owner of Rodolpho's, a Mexican restaurant in Silverlake, about the prospect of using

his facility as a performance space. The owner, Rudy, was receptive, and Peace Pipe was born. As Octavio recalls:

There was a guy Rudy at LA City College who played trombone. He owned two restaurants. He owned, uh, that restaurant right on Silverlake (Blvd.). I forget what it was called, and he also owned Rodolpho's in Silverlake. He owned two bar/restaurants, Mexican bar/restaurants, and that's how I got into Rodolpho's because up to that point I was over at the King King. And he's like, "yeah, come on down, check it out." And I was like "Ay, this place is cool. Can I do something here?" He's like, "Sure" (Camacho 2014).

In order to get Peace Pipe up and running, Octavio took on nearly every sector of the division of labor involved in the production of musical performance. Through phone calls, he coalesced a group of musicians and DJs to alternate mostly improvised tunes with DJ spins throughout each evening of the event, he implanted his own project Groovin' High as the house band, he secured equipment through rentals and donations from other musicians, he alternated the roles of doorperson and sound engineer with other musicians in attendance, he helped musicians with load-ins and break-downs of their gear (thus effectively serving as the grip labor force with other musicians), and he performed on saxophone with Groovin' High and other acts at the venue. In effect, Octavio, with help from other musicians, became a multi-specialized entrepreneur who took on a vast number of roles traditionally relegated to a variety of trades in more conventional musical performance spaces – trades such as venue manager, grip labor, promoter, venue booking agent and band manager.

To understand just how varied the roles were that Octavio took on in the production of Peace Pipe, consider his recollection of chauffeuring Oliver Charles, a drummer at Peace Pipe who went on to tour and record with Ben Harper and Gogol

Bordello: “I would have to go pick him up at his dad’s house and carry all those drums down his stairs, and then take him back after the gig...and I would do that for him all the time because he loved music, his energy was there, you know? He wanted to be there, and he was a good musician, and it made everything sound good that he was there” (Camacho 2014). Additionally, musicians used Peace Pipe and other such underground venues to sell mix tapes of their own recordings, thus effectively transforming such venues into distribution sites for music produced without industry involvement. On the one hand, then, through Octavio’s story, we can understand the complexity faced by musicians who wished to establish intercultural scenes in desegregation era Los Angeles as neoliberalism shifted the entire burden of the division of labor onto them. On the other hand, neoliberalism left such musicians little choice but to become fluent in every sector of the division of labor involved in musical performance, a skill set that then enabled them to establish scenes that functioned autonomously in relation to the segregationist practices of the music industry. Peace Pipe thus gives us an intriguing look into the ways in which neoliberal economics both hindered and enabled the establishment of intercultural scenes during desegregation era Los Angeles.

Furthermore, left to fund venues and events entirely on their own, musicians delved even further into entrepreneurship as they were forced to develop modes of finance beyond that of merely running venues and selling mix tapes. That is, they were forced to get creative with new and innovative forms of funding in order to keep clubs up and running and to keep people coming through the door. Octavio recalls

such modes of creative entrepreneurship as he recounts delving into aspects of the restaurant industry when he began offering free waffles in order to attract people to Peace Pipe after it had lost its allure and novelty as a fresh scene in Los Angeles. Interestingly, it would be another musician, John Brooks, who took on the role of chef as he stepped off the drums and into the kitchen to batter it up. As Octavio recalls:

And then we had John Brooks making waffles. After it wore down a little bit, we had to figure out different ways, um, we did Tuesday nights for over two years...So towards the end, we had to figure out ways to bring people back...so we had Free Waffle Night. We had waffles so we had John Brooks cooking up waffles in the back...That's when we got Oliver to sub for John Brooks (on drums) (Camacho 2014).

Elsewhere in the city, musicians and club/scene founders (who will remain anonymous) turned to the sales of marijuana to help provide the capital necessary to sustain self-sufficient intercultural venues. When I asked X, a guitar player at this venue what X remembered about the scene, X did not turn to the crowd, the music or the vibe first. Instead, X recalled the shifting roles of labor and entrepreneurship that X engaged:

DW: I am trying to build an archive of memories of that spot. I am wondering if you any memories, like specific memories.

X: Oh man, I remember selling pot in the patio for Y (the club/scene founder). I remember he was my first boss. Yeah, I played in his band and sold his weed...Man, what fun...It was good times, man. Have all our friends come out and hang out and get high up at (name of venue) (Interview with X 2014).

Hence, in addition to taking on roles as varied as chauffer, grip labor, sound engineer and promoter, musicians who founded and played at the underground intercultural

venues I researched also took on roles that had little to do with the music such as chef and weed dealer. Considering that the latter occupation was taken up by a musician who was selling the product for the actual club/scene founder, it is a relatively safe assumption that the capital raised through marijuana sales helped to sustain this event. In this sense, neoliberalism's emphasis on rugged individualism and free market enterprise pushed musicians to not only take on the full spectrum of the division of labor involved in the production of musical performance, but also to engage other entrepreneurial pursuits in an effort to sustain the scenes, even venturing into business models that included the distribution of promotional food items and the sales of illicit substances. We can therefore understand musicians' navigation of the economic climate brought on by the rise of neoliberalism as a series of creative entrepreneurial investments that not only allowed them to maintain their craft, but also to forge spaces and scenes that functioned autonomously in relation to the recording industry. In so doing, these spaces offered unique possibilities for musicians to engage an intercultural politics that was not possible within the context of a segregated music industry. They were thus able to transform their alienation from mainstream networks of employment and performance into self-sufficient scenes that provided spaces to perform and compose music with full creative right, to distribute original recordings of their music uninhibited by industry involvement, and to engage oppositional politics that challenged the racist and classist currents that had taken form in the music industry and other walks of the city's public and private institutions. These spaces thus maintained an environment ripe with unique and

ongoing (trans)formations of the self as musicians carried their party principles of inclusivity and interculturality beyond the confines of the gated schoolyards and onto the stages and dance floors of desegregation era Los Angeles.

Conclusion

...Even when multiculturalism was young, wild-eyed, and dangerous, it seemed destined for bland respectability, stiff-necked formality, and a particularly unforgiving senescence – set upon by goons, abandoned by its BFFs, its kin and offspring publicly protective but privately embarrassed about how it had let itself go...It was up to the young, wild-eyed and dangerous...to be the first to suggest that this doomed-to-be-regrettable word maybe wasn't such a bad idea.

~ Jeff Chang (writing about Ishmael Reed)

Hope and Despair

Late April of 2017 was surreal. Sunday, the 23rd was Ozomatli Day, a holiday which commemorates a band that has come to elicit and embody a utopic vision for the unique homegrown multiculturalism of Los Angeles. That is, their music inspires a hope, or, in Joey Derusha's terms, soothes with the "relief" that, "Maybe this can work. Maybe there is something greater that we're all doing together that we can't do separately" (Derusha 2013). As such, their music symbolizes a reprieve from the racial terrors that continue to haunt our city and our nation. Ozomalti, and intercultural ensembles within the city more broadly, have always offered this gift. Within their music, there is something recognizable, something so natural that it makes the difference we also confront in the music feel familiar. Through sound, it articulates a (trans)formation of self forged through interculturality, and it allows us to indulge a utopic vision of a city unified. On Ozomalti Day, I allow myself this hope, and, as their music also articulates the devastation caused by the systemic racism, police brutality, and institutional neglect that continues to divide the city

along racial lines, I direct this hope towards those spaces that suffer the most from the fallout from these atrocities, as I imagine a city without them.

Then came Saturday, April 29, 2017, the 25th anniversary of the 1992 Uprising. For many of us who grew up during the riots and saw the four officers who brutally beat Rodney King celebrate their acquittals on national television, April 29th elicits a horrific, gut wrenching, blood-boiling anger, coupled with a sadness – a deep, desperate, incorrigible sadness. It is impossible to describe the emotions that led many people to set fires, throw rocks, beat, maim, and kill. It is a day of despair. Making it worse was the knowledge that this was nothing new – it had just been caught on tape this time. Yet, even as the entire city had witnessed the brutal beating of a helpless man, no justice would be served. The lives of black folks simply did not mean enough to our judicial system. So, with a feeling of hopelessness, we turned our anger inward, toward our city, toward each other. For days on end, the city burned. Lots of folks lost everything, but hope was the first to go.

On May 1, 1992, in the middle of it all, Rodney King was brought out onto the national stage, where he took his place behind a podium full of microphones. It is not clear who brought him out, but King has admitted to being handed a script that was too “corny” for him to read (VH1 2012). Staring into the television cameras, looking confused and indecisive, King stuttered as he delivered his message to us: “Can we all get along?” The irony was so painful that I laughed. Literally, for the first time since the verdict, I stopped...and I laughed. I didn’t know what else to do. *Can we all get along? Are you kidding me? Did somebody put him up to this? Did*

the police or the National Guard or some other government agency threaten to harm him further if he didn't say something to try to restore "order" in the city? Or was I just too enraged or too naïve to fathom that King could have actually endured a beating like that and come out on the other end with an offering of hope? I didn't believe it. He looked confused and sad, even scared, and, at that point, there was only one obvious answer to his question anyway: "No, we can't."

In the years since, I have come to realize that in the middle of despair, King's pronouncement harkened to the same utopia that is embodied by Ozomatli's music – a place where we all sing, dance, and "get along." And my disbelief, my distrust, my flat-out laughter at this pronouncement in the middle of a racial uprising was rooted the fact that that our city has a long tradition of calling upon this utopia as a means to employ a disingenuous celebratory multiculturalism to quell the resentments, the angers, and the despair many of us rightfully feel because our city's institutions have done little more than pay lip service to achieving racial equality. The utopia has frequently been evoked, but often in an attempt to pacify the angst that might get us closer to it, or, in the case of the riots, to quell an uprising that aimed to check the violence of the state with the violence of the people. This is how I heard King's pronouncement on that day in May 1992 – as a disingenuous ploy by the city's institutions, carried out through the voice of a coerced victim of their racism, to put out a fire they had started in a city they had neglected. In this sense, "Can we all get along?" displaced King's victimization onto the city itself, onto all of our inability, as residents, to just "get along," and, in so doing, shifted the blame from its rightful

focus – the institutionalized racism within the LAPD and our judicial system that had allowed Stacey Koon, Laurence Powell, Timothy Wind, and Theodore Briseno to nearly beat King to death on video tape, jokingly discuss the beatings over police radios (Serrano 1993), and then get off scot-free in a court of their peers. Our anger was belittled; it was dismissed; it was turned around upon us in an effort to make us feel silly and small for feeling such rage. Through King’s pronouncement, we were being told that this uprising, and King’s beating ostensibly, was actually our fault because we were not able to just “get along.”

I am not implying this was King’s intent, however. Looking back through the tapes, what the media often omitted from the clips of King’s speech during the riots was his more radical pronouncement that, “We’ll get our justice. They’ve won the battle, but they haven’t won the war,” a proclamation that was far more in line with the chants of “No Justice, No Peace” emanating from the streets. With that said, King may have also been sincere in the “Can we all get along?” clip that was playing nonstop on the news cycle. He may have just been a bigger person than me, and had truly maintained his hope through all the bloodshed and institutional disregard. Each year, on April 29th, I try to play out this possibility in my mind, that the man who had the most right to be angry nevertheless maintained a hope that one day we would achieve the utopia, but, in all honesty, even though King has insisted that his speech was impromptu (King and Spagnola 2012), I am usually overcome with suspicion, and I usually just feel despair.

Taken together, the hope and despair juxtaposed by Ozomatli Day and the 25th anniversary of the '92 Uprising produce a dissonance, one which epitomizes the contradictions of Los Angeles multiculturalism. These contradictions emerged during the desegregation era and set the terms for a conceptual branding of contemporary Los Angeles multiculturalism, which touts a monolithic utopia of interracial resolve, but is actually marked by the persistence of institutionalized racial violence and oppression coupled with an ironic investment in the Civil Rights Movement's ethos of racial democratization. This ironic coupling is further confounded as local governments and institutions frequently employ a disingenuous repackaging of the latter to mask the persistence of the former. Nevertheless, these ironies and contradictions laid the terms for the city's unwieldy shift away from state sanctioned Jim Crow-type legislation toward the rebranding of Los Angeles as a global city marked by multiculturalism.

Scholarly works investigating contemporary Los Angeles' unique and contradictory brand of multiculturalism usually place its emergence within the nationalized context of post-civil rights US society and/or the even broader globalized context of transnational flows of people, commerce and culture. This dissertation, however, has sought to illuminate how the more localized context of *intra-municipal* flows of people and music across segregated neighborhoods came to define the contemporary uniqueness of Los Angeles' multiculturalism just as powerfully as, and in conjunction with, national and transnational contexts. Toward this end, this project has employed a social psychological approach to develop this localized account – not

local merely in terms of the municipal flows that fostered interculturality during the desegregation era, but also in the most intimately localized terms of the self. This dissertation thus offers a microsociological intervention into studies of intercultural music from Los Angeles – an investigation that predicates the emergence of contemporary Los Angeles multiculturalism upon musical forms used to navigate social interactions that occurred within the context of racial desegregation. In so doing, it has aimed to illuminate the role that music played in unique (trans)formations of self marked by interculturality, which begot emancipatory forms of cultural identity and senses of communal belonging that coevolved with the contradictions of the city’s newly emergent embracement of multiculturalism.

Ozomalti as Cultural Ambassadors

Implications of these (trans)formations are far-reaching, however, expanding far beyond the more localized context of this dissertation. Nowhere is this more evident than Ozomatli’s Middle Eastern tour, which composed the contradictions of Los Angeles multiculturalism into the globalized context of an imperialist war. In 2006, the US Department of State, under George W. Bush, proposed to bestow the title of “Cultural Ambassador” upon the members of Ozomatli. After what Wil “Wil Dog” Abers, Ozomatli’s bassist, refers to as “a lot of internal conversation, turmoil if you will, arguments” (NPR 2009), the band agreed, and embarked on a government-sponsored tour of the Middle East. Justin Porèe, percussionist for the band, addresses the band’s confusion over being chosen to represent the US on a global stage:

DW: What's up with the State Department? Why do you think they were interested in Ozo, man?

Justin: I don't know, and it was weird too. It was during the Bush regime. I don't really know. It was probably somebody inside the State Department...that liked our music, that liked our message...I'm sure they like pitched the idea...and the...Head of the State Department at the time, she was probably like, "What? Are you fucking kidding me? These dudes' politics, and like what they stand for? You're gonna send them out to represent us" (Porée 2015)?

Nevertheless, this is precisely what the State Department did, and, much like Rodney King's "Can we all get along" pronouncement, it was a gesture that carried with it all the hope and despair triggered by public displays of US investments in multiculturalism.

Ozomatli embodies a strand of interculturality that possesses a sincerity that is rare to US multiculturalism. Theirs was a hard-fought achievement by youths whose upbringing in the desegregation era meant daily encounters with racial antagonisms produced through the US's sordid history of racial violence and oppression. Yet, it would ultimately become a remarkably marketable version of interculturality, one that could be deployed to fabricate a disingenuous celebratory multiculturalism that harkened to the attainment of a post-racial America while obscuring the persistence of racial inequality. The Middle Eastern tour served as a global extension of this sort of repackaging, as the State Department mobilized Ozomatli's strain of intercultural sincerity as a pawn to temper anti-American sentiment while the US advanced its agenda as a colonial power engaged in an imperialist war.

With this said, it is far too reductive, and extremely unfair, to frame Ozomatli's Middle Eastern tour merely as some chess move in an imperialist war. To

do so would be to ignore the coevolutionary context of Ozomatli's involvement in the tour, a context (trans)formed in a reciprocal fashion by both the State Department's and the band's objectives. Although the State Department's intention may have been to temper opposition to the war, the tales of the tour told by the band's members paint a far more nuanced portrait of intercultural exchange, mutual respect, and new forms of cross-cultural understanding. As such, The Middle Eastern tour was complex and contradictory, and while it may have been intended to quell US opposition in the region, Ozomatli's aspirations coevolved with this objective, and the tour opened up dialogues between people from the region and Americans who shared their disdain for the war and the Bush administration. Wil Dog speaks precisely to the way in which the administration's *and* the band's aspirations coevolved to produce the Middle Eastern tour:

You know, in a way, it's like us being Americans and going around the world, we - I mean, we are showing who we are. We're not apologetic in any way. We don't hide our politics anywhere that we go. So in a way, it's good for people to see around the world that there's an administration in place, and then there's the individuals in place. And we're a part - I'm proud of what we spread around the world (NPR 2009).

Ulises Bella, Ozomatli's saxophonist, recalls a specific example of this type of cross cultural connection during his time in Egypt, "We were walking around the pyramids, and this guy just came up to me, and he's like 'Where you from?' And I'm like, 'Oh, I'm from Los Angeles.' 'I love Americans, I love Americans, but I can't stand your government.' And you know what, all of a sudden, it opened up a dialogue" (CNN 2007). We can assume that this dialogue revealed similar political leanings in terms of US foreign policy between the person Ulises met in the pyramids and the band's

members, especially when we consider Ozomatli's longstanding opposition to the war summarized by their guitarist, Raul Pacheco, in an interview on CNN, "We don't agree with this war, and we haven't since the get go" (2007). Hence, their time in Egypt served to facilitate cross-cultural understandings that would otherwise not have been possible, a practice that coevolved with, and in some instances countered, US military interests in the region¹.

Justin further discusses the type of cross-cultural understandings fostered by the Middle Eastern tour as he notes how they provided a platform for social interactions that began to unravel assumptions members of the band and people from various Middle Eastern countries held about each other. As he notes:

There's a perception, obviously, about... Western pop music and Western culture, and I think... in a lot of ways we don't really fit that mold, but we do incorporate some of that style, whether it's in the music or the way we dress... Maybe it throws them in a loop for a second. "Whoa, I thought like Jay-Z or whoever," or... whatever they see on TV or hear on the radio or read in a magazine, we necessarily don't fit that mold, but we still bring the energy... We're just mixing so much stuff, it's like what they had perceived as Western culture, it's just so much more. And same goes for us too... our perceptions of what goes on there, it's like once we have an interaction face-to-face, it changes everything (Artisan News Service 2010).

Justin's experience in the Middle East speaks powerfully to the social psychological premise of this dissertation – that our senses of self, our definitions of reality, and our understandings of community and belonging are all (trans)formed through social

¹ Similar forms of cross-cultural connections are discussed in Penny Von Eschen's (2004) *Satchmo Blows up the World*, which explores the multiplicity of contradictory outcomes when the US State Department bestowed the title of cultural ambassador upon numerous jazz musicians – including Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk – and dispatched them on a government-sponsored international tour during the Cold War.

interactions. Additionally, his recount is reminiscent of the experiences youths had on the desegregated schoolyards, when face-to-face interactions began to trouble many of the one-dimensional assumptions they harbored about those who lived across the tracks. Ozomatli's Middle Eastern tour, then, took the same project of desegregation, which, in its most sincere form, aimed to undo the alienation and racial separatism produced through the US's history of racial segregation, and transplanted it to regions where the US had caused horrific suffering. In this sense, Ozomatli was the perfect choice for this project. They had been formed through the historical context of desegregation, and were thus fluent in speaking across cross-cultural antagonisms, misunderstandings and difference.

Justin elaborates further upon how the band reframed their experiences of growing up in Los Angeles in order to establish cross-cultural understandings with people in the Middle East:

Cuz you're from LA...Cuz you're from the city, you have a different feeling about it, so when you go to another place, even when it's even more fucked up than Nickerson Gardens (in the 80s), I wouldn't feel scared. Just being aware of the surroundings...Like when we were kids...We knew there was shady shit happening, right... So, shit like that, when we were playing (music) in the hood (in other countries), you know that feeling when shit's not right, and we just use that intuition to figure it out ...like Raul (Ozomatli's guitarist) grew up in Boyle Heights in the 80s, so we have that (experience). Asdru (Ozomatli's lead singer) grew up in Glassell Park in the 80s...so...we just use that intuition...Most of the people in the State Department, like higher up...can't relate to people in the street...Like as soon as we get out of the car, the way we dress...kids just come running up to you, "hip hop, Tupac, Biggie, breakdance"...Like when we go to the hood (in other countries), we don't need cops (police escort). They already know we're different. They know immediately (Porè 2015).

In this sense, while the State Department exerted its ability to redefine social reality by repackaging Ozomatli's strand of interculturality in order to advance military objectives, Ozomatli's members demonstrated its own ability to reframe the situated knowledge (Haraway 1988) they had gained growing up in Los Angeles within the globalized context of the Middle Eastern tour. They brought with them an "intuition," a situated knowledge that lent itself to certain contexts within the Middle East, which meant they knew how to dress, how to interact, and how to sense danger within these contexts. Perhaps most importantly, this intuition meant they did not need police escorts, a practice which helped to "immediately" signal that they were "different." In so doing, they were able to establish a rapport by distancing themselves not just from local authorities, but also from "most of the people in the State Department" who "can't relate to people in the street." Hence, while the State Department asserted its institutional authority in an attempt to repackage Ozomatli's multicultural expressive culture into a pacifying agent, the band's members employed their own reframing of the experiences through which their selves had been (trans)formed in order to build cross-cultural coalitions with people in the Middle East – people who shared the band's distrust of law enforcement, affinity for hip hop culture, and opposition to US military presence in the region.

The irony here is that this is precisely why the US Department of State chose Ozomatli – because they could do the type of cultural diplomacy that it could not. This suggests an exhausting reality: that while the State Department and the band engaged contradictory objectives, they both helped achieve the other's ends. Hence,

the contradictions and complexities of this tour, which were undoubtedly foreshadowed by the internal discord among the band members while coming to the decision to work with the State Department, epitomize the way in which the youths whose senses of self were (trans)formed within the localized context of desegregation era Los Angeles were mobilized to achieve a set of contradictory outcomes via the global dissemination of celebratory multiculturalism. The Middle Eastern tour was thus a globalized extension, a transplantation to a global stage, of the contradictions of multiculturalism that were mobilized locally via Mayor Villaraigosa's christening of April 23 as Ozomatli day, and Rodney King's "Can we all get along" pronouncement – contradictions that emerged during the desegregation era and began to cast multiculturalism as a defining feature of the city.

In the years since the Middle Eastern tour, Ozomatli has been dispatched several times by the State Department to regions of the world including Tunisia, India, Jordan, Nepal, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, and China. Hence, while this dissertation is unique in its focus on localized experiences and intimacies, the research also speaks to a broader body of literature that places the (trans)formation of Los Angeles and US multiculturalism within the context of globalization and transnationalism. As such, this dissertation works both outward and inward along a spectrum of scale ranging from the intimacy of the self, to intra-municipal flows of music and people, to globalized cultural and political enactments of Los Angeles multiculturalism. In so doing, this dissertation's social psychological approach operates on a broad range of scales as it situates: a) the self as a creative site

empowered through (trans)formations that interactionally coevolve with other people and sociohistorical contexts to produce both the potentials and limitations of social reality; and b) music as a site through which the self enacts these (trans)formations.

While this dissertation has meant to neither celebrate nor condemn the desegregation effort of the LAUSD, it *has* intended to celebrate the hard work put in by youths who attended the desegregated schools. In particular, this dissertation pays homage to the music composed by youths throughout the city who engaged cultural forms to actively construct the new possibilities, and communities, that emerged in the desegregation era. The aim has been to bring visibility to an under-explored, yet valuable thread of interculturality that emerged through the often stormy, sometimes hopeful, desegregation effort of the LAUSD. Although I bring a deep sadness to this dissertation – sometimes even despair – given that some of the emancipatory work these youths engaged has been repackaged to perform cultural work in the opposite direction, this dissertation still stands as a *celebration*, a sincere *labor of gratitude* to the people and the music that (trans)formed our potentials during the desegregation era, and, in so doing, offered hope to “a nation that just can’t stand much more” (Scott-Heron 1974). Although it is clear that the ability of the state to maintain hegemony and uphold the workings of white supremacy in the post-civil rights era and beyond has been shockingly versatile, adaptable and resilient, the music that

emerged during this era proved capable of fostering communities that countered these historical legacies, thus offering a hope within despair. And while the future is uncertain, one thing is clear: music possesses an extraordinary power that operates at either end of the pendulum's swing with its enormous potential to both reify *and* destabilize seemingly irrepressible systems of oppression, sometimes within the contradictory performance of a single song. (Trans)formative potentials produce emancipatory outcomes coupled with oppressive returns; utopic achievements double as fantastic diversions; and *all that is solid melts into sound...*

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