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ALL POSERS MUST DIE:

THE PARADOXICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF AND COMMUNITY IN 19th
CENTURY AMERICAN LITERATURE AND HARDCORE MUSIC

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The Paradoxical Relationship Between the Self and Community in 19th Century American Literature and Hardcore Music

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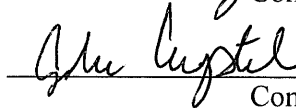
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Abstract

The American Romantic period is a literary space that holds a high level of academic significance. Hardcore music genres Punk, Thrash Metal, and Groove Metal all represent aspects of the cultural time period that they occupy. The tendency to view these artistic mediums as separate presents the concern: how are they the same? Hardcore music is a reiteration of Romantic period sentiment due to its use of social satire and shared celebratory language; Hardcore music highlights that the tension between the Dark Romantics and Transcendentalists is actually the solution to the questions that they pose. F.O. Matthiessen, David Reynolds, and Robert Pattinson discuss how the significance of this literary period is rooted in the synthesis of political writings, reform cultures, frontier humor, and philosophical texts; this synthesis creates the binary opposition of the Dark Romantics and the Transcendentalists. This synthesis of ideas continues as the themes of this period blend with various musical styles, like Folk and Blues, to create the foundations of Hardcore music. The understanding that these ideas are carried from proto-Romantic creatives to proto-Hardcore musicians furthers the significance of Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville. The methods employed in this thesis is comparative analysis of these authors and musicians Woody Guthrie, Robert Johnson, the Circle Jerks, Black Flag, Metallica, Pantera, and Corrosion of Conformity. These artists confirm that these themes are so culturally significant that they show up in places that are often unexpected. These findings illustrate not only the impact of 19th century authors, but allows for further eras of study. Further areas for research include Romantic period connections to Riot Grrrl Punk, Indigenous Metal, and Gothic literatures ties to the Emo music scene, and how Hip-Hop functions similarly.

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Introduction

America's 19th century is a time period that largely shaped American literary expression. The ideas and themes of that time sprang up in the face of social reform, political turmoil, and change. Those social tensions gave rise to the American Romantic authors who utilized various genre conventions to articulate their views of the world around them. These ideas lay the thematic foundation for a uniquely American literary identity. Actively and passively, new contributions reiterate the themes and ideas from the past. Within the American Romantic period, the responsibilities of the self and community are a major point of tension. The Romantic authors set a goal related to finding out what those responsibilities are. Over time, these ideas imbed themselves deeply into American culture and show up in various places; Hardcore music offers a space where these ideas display themselves in an approachable way. Hardcore music offers a contemporary entry point for the ideas of Romantic literature. The American literary canon is uniquely positioned as a space that promotes the self and the community through the binary opposition of the Dark Romantic and Transcendental schools of thought. Hardcore music takes on the task of figuring out the boundaries and limitations of viewing these concepts as mutually exclusive. Through paradoxical fusing, the tension between the two schools of thought is resolved. While they have had fairly strict borders between them, American Romantic Literature and Hardcore music function in a similar way.

Nineteenth-century Romantics drafted a view of the world that has held on actively and passively in American culture. Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville are pushed into the collective memory, and it informs the creation of artistic expression. As a secondary educator, a question that I frequently encounter is: why does this literary period matter? I regularly enter into discussions about how everything that my students experience falls onto either side of the

American Romantic discourse. It has become a running joke where my students and I attempt to map the Dark Romantic or Transcendentalist ideas onto fictional characters, politicians, and musical genres. In the context of the American Romantics, Dark Romantic literature concerns itself with dark ideas of humanity. On the other side, the Transcendentalists offer an optimistic discussion of the self. The value of this period is that it provides methods for approaching, discussing, and creating art. Both periods of artistic expression thematically focus on social critique, individualism, and a blurring of positive and negative emotional states. Stylistically, the American Romantic period and Hardcore music utilize the boldness of the themes to invigorate the literature and music. The lineage of Romantic thought flows from the nineteenth century to Blues, Folk, Punk, Thrash Metal, and Groove Metal. Due to the focus of this project being the themes of the period, the goal is to lay a foundation of connective tissue between how different art forms employ the same concepts. Specific discussions like identity or class would be interesting avenues for further research, and understanding the fundamentals of Hardcore allows for those discussions to take place. Possible avenues for further research are Riot Grrrl Punk, Indigenous Metal, or the similarity between Hip-Hop and Metal. The focus of this project is to provide a methodology for further research. The aim of this work is to examine how Romantic thought within Metal and its influences can often present its form of individualism as cartoonishly exaggerated masculinity. When looking at some of the key players within the Hardcore music space, these ideas start to manifest.

The ties between Romantic literature and Hardcore music is not hidden by any means. There are direct references from Metallica to Thoreau in "Of Wolf and Man" through the usage of "In Wildness is the preservation of the world" (3:33). This creates a unique pairing of the themes of the Transcendentalists with the rage of Thrash Metal. Recasting Transcendental

philosophy as Thrash's own celebration of self, through exaggeration and the Imagined Primitive, allows for a higher level of immediacy compared to literature. Mastodon's album *Leviathan* is an adaptation of *Moby-Dick* that highlights the connection of literature to music on a level that illustrates a basic level of influence. These basic connective references point out that there is an awareness on the part of metal to American Romantic literature.

The Library of Congress' National Recording Registry inducted *Master of Puppets* by Metallica in 2016, and in an article by Nate Pedersen, he states, "Master of Puppets," the third album from Metallica and its first on a major record label, "shows the group moving away from its thrash metal history and reputation and exploring new ideas." Metal has become a part of the national canon, and it occupies the same level of reverence as the works of Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville. The library's press release even acknowledges the countercultural values displayed by Metallica, which are also present in the transcendental works of Emerson and Thoreau. With this binary opposition so prevalent and valued in American media, the question arises as to why. The concerns of the self and community continue to persist. Art forms that concern themselves with those themes hit a continued and valued point of interest.

The Romantic period themes are foundational to the development of Rock music's earliest forms. In *Triumph of Vulgarly*, Robert Pattinson states that Rock's development in the South was crucial to the pairing of the two thematically. Pattinson states that the South was "an area that has a history of translating Romantic ideas into action" (51). The ethos of the Romantic period is given the time and space to intermingle with the music that would go on to create Rock music. In turn, these codependent influences inspire the later Hardcore subgenres.

Thematically, Metal music and the Romantic period cover the same sentiments in vehicles that appear differently cosmetically. The tension between the individual and the

community speaks to the concern American culture has with the individual and the community. The individual functions as a representative that creates community, but their desire for authenticity then blurs the positive and the negative aspects of both of the concepts. This love-hate relationship highlights that while negative emotions are stigmatized, they are just as valuable in creating community and the self.

Literature Review

F. O. Matthiessen, David Reynolds, and Robert Pattinson provide the foundations for uncovering the connective tissue between the American Romantic Period and Hardcore music. F. O. Matthiessen in *American Renaissance* and David Reynolds in *Beneath the American Renaissance* discuss the value of this period and these authors at length, but their focus on the period is backwards-facing. These scholarly pillars of nineteenth-century American studies highlight the value of the themes of social critique and individualism. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, published in 1941, focuses on the 19th-century canon authors and looks at how their works manifest their views on art in their texts from 1850 to 1855. This focus allows for a very detailed discussion of the themes and philosophical approach of Hawthorne, Whitman, Melville, Emerson, and Thoreau. Reynold's *Beneath the American Renaissance*, published in 1988, shifts the focus from those authors specifically and discusses the influences that underpin the themes of the period. Reynolds also discusses how humor, sensationalism, and sexuality are represented or discussed during this period; he takes Matthiessen's work and expands on it greatly in areas that were overlooked previously. Both of these texts highlight the tensions that are present between the Transcendentalist ideas and the Dark Romantic critique. Both Matthiessen and Reynolds codify this period as significant historically and artistically for American culture but discuss each strain as separate from the other.

Robert Pattison, in his 1987 work *The Triumph of Vulgarity*, discusses the ways in which contemporary Rock music echoes the sentiment of the Romantic period. Pattinson's focus in this work is foundational to understanding the evolution from literature to Rock and Metal Music. He arrives at this conclusion through the use of the concept of vulgarity. Pattinson defines this as a lack of cultivation and a noisy disposition (5). This parallels the concept of the Primitive that will be discussed later, but the term wild is synonymous with both. Pattinson's text unpacks how the only real addition that Hardcore music makes to Romantic ideas is that it gives action to ideas. In doing so, Hardcore music provides a work-space for the ideas of the Romantic period.

While Matthiessen, Reynolds, and Pattinson discuss literature and music in terms of what they have done, I am concerned with how the music progresses and changes to the current state of the genre. This evolution of Hardcore is based on an active engagement with the Romantic period. Due to this active engagement with the themes of the self and the community, this thesis engages with the period in a way that turns the focus away from the past and toward an active use of the cultural ideas that nineteenth-century authors provided. In *American Renaissance*, Matthiessen states, "Where the age of Emerson may be most like our own is in its discovery of the value of myth. The starting point is in Emerson's 'History,' the opening essay in his first collection. He believed that history can be re-created only by a man for whom the present is alive" (626). Matthiessen's discussion of Emerson's ideas highlights the ethos of this thesis. History is reiterated through art; by engaging with it, society understands itself and the history that led to the moment at which they connect with it. Ideas of social critique and individualism are present throughout the Romantic period, and Hardcore music's usage of these ideas allows for those conversations to be carried to future generations. This work aims to take this sentiment and discuss the ways in which the past and present meet in the artistic expression of cultural

myth, history, and values. Hardcore music takes the pieces that these authors discuss and reiterates them through a rage-filled exaggeration of individualism and social critique.

A key point that all of these authors discuss is the importance of social awareness, individualism, and aggression in American literature; these themes within the period all create a collective cultural identity that exhibits a binary oppositional pull between individualism and collectivism. This value is espoused by Matthiessen: “No wonder that Emerson believed that he was asserting a truth of cardinal importance for human development when he said in 1840: ‘In all my lectures, I have taught one doctrine, namely, the infinitude of the private man.’ Such a statement is the point from which any consideration of Emerson as an artist must start” (6). The limitlessness of the individual situates itself as the point of discussion that he, Reynolds, and Pattison discuss at length in their respective books. A mutual approach in discussing this limitlessness is through the concept of the Primitive.

The concept of the Primitive, as used by both Romantic authors and Pattinson, has a history tied to it that can be difficult to parse. Issues of colonialism, racial mischaracterization, and the perpetuation of harmful stereotypes or archetypes often get attributed to a primitivist lens. Ben Etherington and Samuel Spinner in “Primitivism Now, Primitivism Again: Introduction” discuss the tense history and the factors that often overshadow it. They state, “The concept of the ‘primitive’ has a long history in English and, according to the Oxford English Dictionary’s etymology, in its early phases, it was solely a temporal concept, referring to an earlier or original state” (Etherington and Spinner 129). This originality of authenticity is a core concern of both the Transcendentalist writers and Hardcore musicians. The aspiration to find a Primitive state in both of these art forms can then be characterized as a movement toward wild originality. They are both looking for a form of definitive humanity. This wildness is found in the

creation of art that, at times, can be perceived as authenticity without authenticity or socially acceptable wildness.

The divide between the Dark Romantics and the Transcendentalists schools of thought is a feature of this broader oppositional divide between individualism and social awareness, but this mythic individual can be seen to be a philosophical idea rather than a practical one. Reynold's analysis of the transcendental individual highlights the ways in which this individualism is only possible in a highly controlled personal level: "Throughout his writings Thoreau demonstrates his awareness that reforms quickly became poisoned, even devilish, unless rigorously practiced by individuals of the utmost integrity" (101). Here, Thoreau is concerned with the practicality of the goals that he supports. That concern is carried and discussed by Thoreau and his contemporaries. The discourse that they are engaged in is carried on by later authors and musicians.

In order to resolve the tensions of the Romantic period, shifting the focus from traditional academic areas provides methods for engagement with the ethos of the period. The tensions, as discussed by Pattinson, are resolved through demystifying Romantic thought: "Rock has made Romanticism available in a populist formula more successful than anything achieved by Tarzan or Conan, and rock offers this populist Romanticism not just as a network of artistic conventions but as a living creed" (38). In creating a vehicle that is subtly Romantic, Rock or Hardcore artists create a philosophy that is founded on the themes of nineteenth-century writers. The living creed that is created provides an active engagement with these ideas. Romantic thought has been studied and codified, but the products of it, specifically Hardcore music, have been treated like the outcasts that they posture as in academia. Matthiessen's foundations, Reynolds' look at archetypes and humor, and Pattinson's connection between the two provide a picture of how

these ideas intermingle. This thesis will provide a fidelity to the discussion that comparatively analyzes these two art forms. These authors, Reynolds mainly, outline the methods by which the populist literature that predates the period helped form the conventions of the literature. Because of the discourse on Romantic literature: we understand that literature is an evolving art form. Romantic literature places a value in subject matter that frequently is overlooked. Through this fixation on social outcasts we find, “From this objective vantage point, potentially reprehensible characters from American popular culture (e.g., drunkards, whores, criminals of all sorts) can be sympathetically portrayed in compassionate, truly democratic poetry” (Reynolds 109). This use of what broader society would consider the negative contingent elevates the wildness of life. Hardcore musicians and fans embody that wildness that Romantic authors promote.

The themes that unify the two mediums concern themselves with the individual and the natural world. Both the literature and the music are trying to find out the role of the individual and the role that the community has in society. The literature provides a transcendental spirit that is carried within the cultural memory. It shows up in the ways that Blues, Folk, Punk, Thrash, and Groove Metal provide people with methods to soothe themselves and the world around them. The paradox of a socially conscious, individualistic society is present in the Romantic period and the Hardcore music genre. The continued discussion on what the individual’s role in society is points out that, socially, it is still a major concern. More recent engagement with this area academically has yielded interesting points of discussion. Amanda Blake Davis and Matthew Sangster discuss the Romantic connection between literature and music, but they focus on them as separate entities structurally.

Davis and Sangster, in “‘Load Every Rift’: Power, Opposition, and Community in Romantic Poetry and Heavy Metal,” further the discussion of the ways in which Romanticism

and Metal music are connected by the methods employed to create art in both periods. Their point that the thematics of power and resistance are a connective tissue is valuable to the discussion. They approach the discussion of literature and music by focusing on the two as mediums. While this is a key difference between the two, both are methods of artistic expression. Both of these art forms utilize themes of social critique and individualism. They are packaged differently, but their focus on individual authors versus collaborative musician groups is not as important to the conversation of themes. Davis and Sangster state, “songs of disaffection [are] designed to be played loudly by bands to screaming crowds. Even when metal lyrics take the form of Romantically inflected retrospections, musical immediacy and performative flair change the manners in which such reflection[s] communicate” (296). The argument that music, due to its performative nature, creates a distinction between literature and music is very true. Music is a medium that can be studied purely as a feature of society that binds communities. Music can be studied purely on a technical performance level. Literature can be studied in a way that is purely academic. The multiplicity of how these art forms can be studied encourages looking into them in nontraditional ways.

The traditional methods of approach, while important for the production of both literature and music, are valuable, but it diminishes the interconnectivity of the two. When a person discovers a band, it is often on their own. In that moment, the imagined protagonist of these songs is the individual. Music allows people to engage with themselves alone or in a group. Concert spaces are a method of the dissemination of Metal music and can create a sense of community, but the introduction to the music and the typical method of enjoyment is more singular.

The reverse is also true of the literature; the introduction to the Romantic period is often in a communal setting. The social enjoyment of reading builds book clubs, classrooms, and branches of academic pursuit. While literature is enjoyed on an individual level, its value is created in a community of various interpretations. Due to the value of literature as an interpretive medium, Hardcore music is another lens with which the academic field can approach literary studies. The focus on the enjoyment of the music in a concert setting can be a limiting factor for traditional methods. However, when looking at the expression of themes through art, the two are more similar than dissimilar. The method of enjoyment can change the intent of the listener, but the function of the music is still closely tied to the themes and intent of the American Romantics.

Key Terms: The Primitive, The Distorted, The Grotesque

With the Primitive being a concept that is utilized to understand the thematic ideas of the period, understanding how it impacts Emersonian sentiment helps in understanding Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville. “Nature” and “Self-Reliance” are touchstone essays for this period. They establish a strong jumping-off point for both the Romantics and Hardcore Musicians. The radical desire of Emerson to elevate the natural world as a spiritual playground creates a strong commitment to the assertion of the self. Conversely, Emerson’s idealism gives space for other authors’ criticism. Melville does this in his characterization of figures in *Moby-Dick*; the natural world in that text is not something that is treated with reverence but a fuel source for Industrialization. “Nature” points to the idea, “To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars” (Emerson 3). This concept points out several ideas that frame the tenuous connection between the Romantic period and the Hardcore subgenres. Emerson establishes that solitude can only be achieved in nature. This

solitude is not only established by nature but by a reflective relationship on the connection between a human being and the natural world.

This meditative relationship with nature creates a space where the internal sense of self gets shaped by the external world's nourishment of the internal self. Emerson goes on to say, "In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows. Nature says, - he is my creature, and maugre all his impertinent griefs, he shall be glad with me" (3-4). The internal self is a space that unifies the external and internal worlds. The internal understands the world around it through its own reaction to it, but it is also healed by the external world's reaction to it as an individual. Emerson's position situates this acknowledgement of beauty as an act of artistry. Emerson places artistry both in the natural world and inherent in the self. Emerson's artistry is the manifestation of art in unconventional spaces. The primitive, the wild, the untamed are spaces that connect humanity so deeply to its original ethos of existence that it pulls the symbolic and practical aspects of identity together. Hardcore music attempts to find this authenticity through the ways that they voice their wild music and Romantic themes.

The analysis of music that takes place in the following chapters will utilize technical and stylistic terms that require a brief description. Distortion is the most accessible; distortion is defined as the clipping of a waveform. This clipping results in additional harmonics being generated that people perceive as fuzzy or dirty (Sweetwater 1:20). All rock music utilizes this to some extent; Punk utilizes a form of distortion called fuzz. Fuzz's sound can be most closely related to a less refined form of distortion that is most easily represented by early rock sounds. This lack of refinement ties itself to Punk due to the directness of the themes and instrumentation. Standard distortion is most often achieved through effects pedals and range in their level of gain to achieve a different sound. Gain is defined as how high the signal strength is

before it is amplified electronically (Owens). Lower gain lessens the effect of the distortion, and higher gain can be a marker of the Metal sound. Groove Metal ups the level of distortion by tuning the guitars lower than standard tuning. The lower the note, the muddier the sound.

Distortion also aids in a wailing sound that is achieved through bending notes; this is pulling the string while playing a note to bend the note toward another. When that note rings out, it will then wail or squeal as opposed to ringing out cleanly. When I characterize a song as squealing or wailing, it is often because there is some form of distorted bending of the notes. This is a common characteristic of Metal as a whole. The rhythm section of these bands plays the foundational piece of music or riff, and the lead player will play solos or links as additions to the core riff. This distortion of sound creates an aggressive tonal quality that most bands utilize to achieve a sound that is messy and crude. This lack of cultivation is a shared language between the Romantic period authors and Hardcore musicians. Both of them are working with themes that promote a crude engagement with societal features.

All of these choices musically create a sense of unrestrained sound. The word distortion implies that the tone of the guitar is not of good quality. This furthers the ties that Hardcore music has to the concept of the Primitive. Punk's simple structure, Thrash's exaggerated rage, and Groove's rhythmic weight are musical engagements with the primitivist impulses of this genre. They use a shared language of inverted meaning where savagery is celebrated, and rage is not weighed down by societal expectations. I discuss the baggage that comes with that lens later in Chapter Two. The Imagined Primitive that is being employed operates on the understanding that these archetypes or tropes lead to hindrances for authentic musical expression. The exaggeration of these ideas in music brings in the concepts of the Grotesque and the Carnavalesque.

Mikhail Bakhtin's work *Rabelais and His World* serves as a theoretical lens that links the musical choices with the literary choices. Bakhtin comments on the connection between the two in stating, "The grotesque and the sublime mutually complement each other, and it is their unity (most fully achieved in Shakespeare) that produces true beauty, unattainable by the classic in all its purity" (45). His reference to Shakespeare as a place that unifies the two is a choice that is similarly made in the focus of this project. Shakespeare's work was accessible art that was made for all classes. Literature and Music join in this union of the grotesque because they are concerned and focused on voicing the beauty of ideas that are not always perceived as beautiful. Bakhtin goes on to state, "the principle of laughter and the carnival sense of the world, on which the grotesque is based, destroy limited seriousness and all claims that perceptions of necessity may have to an extratemporal validity and unconditionality, and free human consciousness, thought, and imagination for new possibilities" (52). Through the lens of satire, sarcasm, and the exaggeration that humor is based on, Hardcore music achieves the beauty of everything that Whitman discusses. Hardcore looks at the wildness of nature that Emerson and Thoreau were focused on and finds that same spirit in human nature. This lens, coupled with the Romantic period themes and concepts of individualism, community, social critique, and paradox, creates a very different context for what literary scholarship typically uses as tools to analyze the American Romantic period and its cultural byproducts.

Chapter Overview: Social Critique, Celebrating the Self, Resolution of Contradictions

Chapter one focuses on social critique's development from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* to Hardcore music. Nathaniel Hawthorne's focus on the critique of Utopian Idealism is based on satirical engagement with the symbolic representation of reform authors. The thematic question of how a reform movement maintains potency is answered by Folk artists.

Folk develops Utopian Critique into Utopian Militancy by giving actionable methods for social reform. Utopian Militancy's dependency on practicality is then tied to the intensity of societal issues. When the Cold War era presents itself as a web of social issues, Folk loses its potency and becomes Punk. Punk derives its potency from the inversion of meaning. Punk's Apocalyptic Satire then exaggerates and laughs at the societal tensions. As this community and musical genre gain social power, it crumbles under the weight of its goals. This is due to neglecting the individual component present in social movements.

Chapter two picks up the pieces that Punk leaves musically and utilizes them to create a grotesque interpretation of Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself." This grotesque exaggeration of Whitman's use of the barbaric yawp is found in the Yawpic caricature of Thrash Metal. While both Whitman and Thrash metal are concerned with authenticity, they both engage with archetypes of rebellious individualism. In doing so, they are engaging with interpretations of individualism. What is interesting is that while they are so fixated on that authentic spirit, they create an understanding that the individual derives meaning from the community around them. While Punk is fixated on community and Thrash is fixated on celebrating the self, they both lose potency because they cannot artistically move past those foundational ideas.

Chapter three's focus is on Herman Melville's character Ahab and on how that method of characterization provides an archetype of individualism that fuses paradoxical components. Melville and Groove Metal operate as a synthesis of the previous ideas. Melville uses this ambiguity to comment on both sides of the Romantic ideological argument. This is represented by Groove Metal's ability to comment on social issues from the perspective of the individual. Groove Metal's Blues heritage provides the understanding that the problem and the solution are often embedded in one another. Transcendentalism is the solution to Dark Romantic questions.

Conversely, when a person takes Transcendental thought to its logical conclusion, it becomes closer to Dark Romanticism than initially understood. The tension of the binary opposition within the American Romantic period is the method of providing the answer to why the self and community are such prevalent themes.

The American Romantic authors synthesize the authors and culture of their time to establish a literary movement that is often perceived as America's first literary and philosophical identity. They produce literary works that are focused on discussing the individualistic and socially conscious culture that was around them at that time. The themes of social critique, celebration, and working through contradiction hold on to the cultural memory and get reiterated again and again. Over the course of this development, these ideas remain in some shape or form. They become more practical or exaggerated and adopt new methods of being as a way to answer the questions that remain. In chapter one, Hawthorne's text deals with the question of how a reform culture achieves its goals practically. Punk's answer is the sardonic detachment that is found in Apocalyptic Satire.

Chapter 1 - Being Different Together: Tracking Social Critique from Hawthorne to Guthrie and Rollins

Dark Romantic literature, within the American Renaissance, focuses on the responsibilities of the individual to the community. The authors of the American Renaissance hold an awareness of the complications that arise within a highly individualistic culture. These complications stem from the tensions between community reform and individualistic preferences. While Emerson promotes the idea that human connection to the natural world creates beauty through the celebration of the self, Hawthorne holds a critical position in regard to sovereign individualism. Hawthorne argues that the individual houses the corruptible elements that lead to the failings of the collective.

Under Hawthorne's view of humanity, the individual is the weakest link. Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* is a critique and satirization of intellectual communities of the time. Hawthorne focuses *The Blithedale Romance* on the critique of the individual and their role within the community. Hawthorne's characters are artistic representations of possible avenues for how reform movements start to lack potency. F. O. Matthiessen and David Reynolds establish the methods in which the reformers of the time engage with the collective culture and art. In doing so, Matthiessen and Reynolds highlight the emerging discourse surrounding social critique. The reform literature informs the methodology of the period and illustrates the cultural concepts of freedom of speech and the right to protest. Both of these concepts are predicated on authenticity. Both of these rights, enshrined in the Constitution, seek to create a world where authenticity can emerge from humanity. In order for these rights to manifest, it has to stem from a mutually positive relationship between the self and the collective. Hawthorne's critique of reform cultures

and reformers themselves questions the ability for authenticity to arise when individuals still have the framework of societal constructs present in their individual consciousnesses.

A binary emerges within the Romantic period between the Dark Romantic strain and the Transcendental strain of thought. The Dark Romantic period is engaging broadly with social reform and critique; the Transcendentalists are more focused on the development and celebration of the self. Within the binary between Dark Romantics and Transcendentalists, questions surrounding the nature of authenticity emerge. Hawthorne and Emerson both use these questions to critique understandings of the role of the individual and the role of community. In order to engage with the self, there can be no pretense to dilute the significance of the self. Hawthorne utilizes these aspects of the emerging American canon to comment on the responsibilities and the pitfalls of an individualistic foundation for a collective culture.

The focus of my work is on how the responsibility of the individual and the community shifts as time goes on. Because that is a primary concern of the American Romantic period, understanding the period's effect on American expression illuminates how those beliefs are employed by individuals. In the development of the mainstream American cultural identity, art is the space where these values and ideas are allowed to be represented fully, but the desire for authentic representation of them requires methods that are best suited for clarity. The goal here, for a creative, is to create a method of expression that promotes the potency of social critique. The preexisting Utopian Idealism, which Hawthorne critiques in *The Blithedale Romance*, strives for this. Utopian Idealism's methodology does not offer practical steps forward.

Hawthorne's concern with the Utopian Idealism of his contemporaries leads to the creation of *The Blithedale Romance*. Hawthorne's position creates a foundation for the criticism of Utopian Idealism. The utopian critique that Hawthorne engages in through *The Blithedale*

Romance is a foundational point for later additions to reform-focused art. Utopian Critique is what gives later creatives the language to critique and create Folk and Punk. The satirizing that Hawthorne employs in regard to the reformers creates artistic representations of utopian subcultures with the intent of criticizing them. While that goal is achieved, the reformers' intent is still not met, leaving a vacuum for later musicians to engage in the discourse surrounding social issues and the concepts of individual identity.

Hawthorne positions the text to offer a Utopian Critique that calls out the impracticality of Utopian Idealism; the practicality that it calls for leads to the establishment of Folk's Utopian Militancy that is represented by Woody Guthrie's music. The jump from literature to music creates a unique situation for Folk musicians. The immediacy and constraints of the Folk genre create an adaptation that answers the literary call for practicality. Utopian Militancy is founded on the belief that practicality is rooted in the promotion of aggressive calls for reform through artistic expression. The ethos of Utopian Militancy, coupled with Folk's direct ties to protest demonstrations, creates a practical route for reform. In creating that actionable change, Folk answers what the literary space was critiquing in *The Blithedale Romance*.

The evolution of reform literature and protest music runs into the rising intensity of the Cold War era. The rising intensity of multiple social issues at that time led to the inversion of Utopian Militancy. That rising intensity during the Cold War era creates Punk music's Apocalyptic Satirical method of approach. Where Utopian Militancy is a practical and artistic call to action, Punk's exaggerated nihilism takes the current fears of society to their logical conclusions. Punk's exaggeration of the themes still carries direct ties with protest demonstrations that Folk exhibited, but Punk's engagement with social issues has a higher level of sardonic detachment. Generations of artists have called for reform, and now Punk will mock

the lack of action that has led to their current societal state. When literature goes as far as it can, Folk employs Utopian Critique to build a practical model of approach for social reform. Folk's methodology forms Utopian Militancy, but its effectiveness is tied to the attitudes of its practitioners. The efficiency of Utopian Militancy is also directly tied to the issues that they are combating. When the intensity of social issues outpaces the ability of the artists, the inversion of meaning leads to finding artistic strength and immediacy in Punk's Apocalyptic Satire.

Because all of these artists are responding to each other or critiquing each other, the mutual engagement creates a blending of the values espoused by Hawthorne and the Folk artists. The themes present before Punk's reiteration of Romantic thought are dependent on a new method of expression to remain relevant. Davis and Sangster in "Load Every Rift": Power, Opposition, and Community in Romantic Poetry and Heavy Metal" state, "Both Romanticism and metal partake of the paradox of the countercultural, seeking to oppose and escape from established frameworks while being queasily subject to the possibility of both echoing and becoming them" (300). The contradiction that Davis and Sangster refer to establishes that countercultural movements are rooted in the social and literary frameworks that they wish to critique. Similar to how the Transcendentalists championed the idea of the individual, The Dark Romantics' work promotes the development of a socially conscious individual who promotes their own standard of social engagement. The community benefits from individualism, and the individual benefits from the community. Punk is a subculture that is highly individualistic, but it has to have something to combat in order to remain relevant.

Hillary Chute echoes the understanding that the individual is a component of the movements they are a part of. In *Why Comics*, her discussion of proto-punk comic artist Robert Crumb illustrates the societal fixation on countercultural commentators and reformers: "A punk

before punk became a movement, Crumb's rejection of mainstream channels shows how self-published DIY comics offers a through-line across antiauthoritarian cultural movements in the second half of the twentieth century" (222). The suggestion here is that counter-cultural methods of cultural engagement and creative expression predate Punk. In understanding that these values were present and waiting for Punk to start, people can see that the creative lineage of these themes can be traced to the American Romantics. Via the Folk connection to the Punk, one can see the roots that both have in 19th-century American literature. Understanding this heritage of expression further unlocks social movements that come after it. Mikhail Bakhtin provides a method of engagement with these two ideas that highlights aspects of the Carnavalesque and Grotesque that are present across Hardcore music and the Romantic period. His work with the dialogic provides a foundational ethos of this inquiry. In "Discourse in the Novel," he states, "The distinctive links and interrelationships between utterances and languages, this movement of the theme through different languages and speech types, its dispersion into the rivulets and droplets of social heteroglossia, its dialogization – this is the basic distinguishing feature of the stylistics of the novel" (263). All of these concepts are found in music as well. Romantic themes move between different mediums based on a web of influence to produce various methods of Hardcore expression. They work with and against each other to produce a grotesque expression of human emotion and Romantic themes. Thrash Metal and Groove Metal have minor variations or focus points that create genre distinctions and individual subcultures. The development of Hardcore music is founded on the same ethos that was utilized in the Romantic period. As Punk music emerges, it employs the same immediacy, humor, and questions surrounding the individual to create authentic engagement with art and community.

Hawthorne: Utopian Idealism and Criticism

Hawthorne's critique of reform literature and Utopian Idealism in *The Blithedale Romance* creates a counter-point to Emerson's perspective. Hawthorne's narrative illustrates how the collective will detract from the goals of the individual, and the individual will detract from the goals of the collective. In *The Blithedale Romance*, the greatest point of tension is how a single individual can ruin the culture of a community. *The Blithedale Romance* comments on the reform cultures of its time and situates itself as a useful text for tracing the roots of Hardcore music because of how socially conscious Punk music is. Because Punk is expressing those same ideas, our understanding of Punk is benefited by the history of those ideas within the Romantic period. Hawthorne points out that reform cultures had a tendency to focus on the end goal and not the individual within the movement. This oversight can lead to a doomed reform effort. Cultures are a collection of individuals that can detract from the broader goal of the community. The weak foundation of a cultural movement provides the plot of *The Blithedale Romance*. Hawthorne creates this narrative by highlighting Zenobia as a symbolic idealization of the desired outcome, and Coverdale depicts the dangers of an armchair reformer.

Emerson and other reformers' use of Utopian Idealism creates a tension between the individual and the community. This tension is an entry point for Utopian Critique. F.O. Matthiessen contributes to the understanding of Utopian Critique in *American Renaissance*: "It enabled [Hawthorne] to criticize, in *The Blithedale Romance*, one phase of the contemporary myth, the quest for Utopia. However inadequately worked out some of his social criticism may be, there is no questioning the acuity with which he saw the weakness of Brook Farm" (652). Matthiessen's foundational voice, in the Romantic space, notes that an aspect of inspiration was the real-world reform cultures of the nineteenth century; Brooks Farm, similar to the Blithedale

social experiment, does not meet the desired ends of its participants because of the lack of actionable direction. While this parallel is useful, the artistic exaggeration of Brooks Farm creates the methods of exaggeration and parody present in the text. Those same methods will be used again in *Folk and Punk*. The critical view of the Utopian outlook leads to a large degree of social satire present in the novel. Hawthorne positions himself to comment on the nature of society and the individual. Reynolds, in *Beneath the American Renaissance*, comments on the fluidity of culture and notes that reform can often create a strange sense of direction when a lack of practical methodology is explicitly stated and engaged with by all members of the movement. To use Reynolds's point, the moral relativism implied by the number of reforms taking place led to an ambiguity of priority (85). Here, Hawthorne is shown to be creating an exaggerated version of reform as a method of Utopian Critique. In doing so, Hawthorne provides that same hazy understanding of the route that reformers take in the creation of Utopian Idealism. Because Utopian Critique highlights ambiguity as an issue for reform, the critique that is taking place is showing that ambiguity leads to failure. *The Blithedale Romance* illustrates that ambiguity, or a lack of direct engagement with reform, leads to not achieving the goal of the movement. *The Blithedale Romance* does not illustrate a way to fix the problems of Utopian Idealism, but it poses the question of how people achieve social reform.

Drawing on the history of various failures of reformers of the time, Hawthorne creates a representation of how these cultures are great at creating utopian visions for the future, but cannot provide action to the ideals. The pitfalls of creating utopian visions are expanded on by Jason Haslam in "Punishing Utopia: Whitman, Hawthorne, and the Terrible Prison." He focuses on the prison reform movement and poses that Hawthorne's work helps illustrate that there is "an ontological instability in the American political project itself" (4). Haslam's commentary focuses

on how instability is the natural state of American politics. Haslam points out that the effectiveness of *The Blithedale Romance* is dependent on how, when multiple reform groups are present, there is an ambiguity about the best path forward. The ineffectiveness of reformers or reform cultures is due to the heart of the American experiment. America, at its core, has so many systemic layers that hamper the change that reformers call for. The tools that are present within the system are not able to achieve the Utopian Idealism that it aims for. The natural state of the American political and social system is the tension between contradictory points or points that are competing with each other for social relevance. Haslam's lens provides a more practical illustration of the fluidity commented on by Reynolds and discusses the reality of uncertainty that utopia is pitted against.

The ambiguity that is present within multiple voices calling for reform provides an opportunity to satirize the situation. *The Blithedale Romance* exaggerates this situation to call out the issues present within reform cultures humorously. Reynolds also notes the presence of humor in Hawthorne's critique: "Hawthorne was aware that native humor tended toward the grotesque and wild, and a major part of his artistic mission was his fashioning of well-sculpted tales in which this humor was ordered and redirected. The anarchic laughter of frontier humor is transcribed into key images in Hawthorne's fiction" (533). The humor displayed within Hawthorne's work is rooted in the popular violent comedy. The humor that is utilized is much closer to an exaggeration of the concept of reform movements. The goals that are being established by the Blithedale reformers are larger than life, and the ways that the community falls apart are dramatized versions of everyday events. Hawthorne uses this exaggeration to create symbolic representations of the shortcomings of utopian idealism as depicted by the dynamic between Coverdale and Zenobia.

The priorities of the Blithedale community are outlined early in the text as “While our enterprise lay all in theory, we had pleased ourselves with delectable visions of the spiritualization of labor. It was to be our form of prayer and ceremonial worship” (Hawthorne 65). The community is founded on what Dean Rader calls “Compositional Resistance” against the trivialization of life (5). Compositional Resistance is achieved through establishing that every individual part of the movement is a method of resisting. The lives of the Blithedale members are acts of protest in opposition to the lives they felt they were living previously (5). The group of intellectuals, in their past lives, were still participating in a society that they disagreed with. By creating a community based on their idea of social reform, every part of society is an act of resistance. The erasure of authentic engagement with humanity was a key concept in the rapidly industrializing world of the Romantic authors, and in this fictional setting, the members of the community hope to elevate every aspect of their livelihood as a counterpoint to the drudgery that they see taking hold.

The collection of artists and orators at Blithedale strives for the elevation of the basic aspects of life through symbolic acts of protest. The intent of the Blithedale community members mirrors the concerns of Hawthorne and his contemporaries, in which artistry was giving way to industry. Utopian Idealism is the reform of the larger social structures; in creating this space, Hawthorne drafts a community with utopian goals, but propels them through a plot that reveals the practical failures of Utopian Idealism. The key characters, Zenobia and Coverdale, are an entry point for the reader to see the detracting values of idealization and the duality of selfishness and reform already present in the goals of the community.

Zenobia is a character who occupies a significant role within the narrative; her characterization elevates her from a plot device to a critique of how Utopian Idealism functions.

Her role as an idealized version of the community members detracts from the higher goals she represents. Because of her depiction as the point of conflict for Coverdale, Hawthorne shows how the idea of a goal can create dissonance with the actions being employed to attain it. David Diamond states in “‘All the While we Have Been Standing by Zenobia’s Grave’: Zenobia’s Suicide in *The Blithedale Romance*, A Psychoanalytic Perspective,” “Whether a consequence of misogyny, idealism, or conscience, these critics approach Zenobia’s suicide as a matter with *gravitas*” (49). The idealism that surrounds Zenobia permeates the community and the minds of both Hollingsworth and Coverdale. Because Zenobia is treated with such reverence by scholars and the characters in the text, the idealism that surrounds her illustrates that she is symbolically the goal of the Blithedale society. She represents what they are hoping to attain by making their reform community. Her death then illustrates that idealism is not enough to meet a goal.

Zenobia’s pseudonym creates a mysterious stage presence for her that mirrors Priscilla’s Veiled Lady but also characterizes her as a character who is masked by royal narratives of the past. The shared characterization between the two women highlights the aspects of elevating them to the status of symbols of their cause and shows that the goal is not practically attainable. This feature of her character elevates her status with mystery and the prestige of the performative aspects of her role as a speaker and reformer. Extrapolating that out onto the idealization of the community and their method of reform illustrates that the pride they share allows for the negative aspects of the community to be overlooked. She and the community engage in a performance of reform. Beneath that, they are still operating from within the system that they are fighting against. Communal pride allows for individuals to take away from the community rather than build it up. If something appears to have a high level of strength, then being supported by it is natural. Feeding back into the community is required for its survival, but not compulsory. She

is further characterized in this line, “Zenobia, by the bye, as I suppose you know is merely her public name; a sort of mask in which she comes before the world, retaining all the privileges of privacy, - a contrivance, in short, like the white drapery of the Veiled Lady, only a little more transparent” (Hawthorne 8). The multiple layers of her persona then further the desire to engage with her, but with a distance that prevents knowing her. This can be extrapolated to the commentary on the nature of social critique that is taking place. Zenobia’s personal methods of presenting herself prevent the goals of human connection from taking place, mirroring the mistakes that will take place in the Blithedale community. The Utopian Idealism that she is tied to is rooted in the perception of her, not the reality of her. She is the figurehead who states the goals of the community most plainly and attempts to perpetuate this through her leadership. She stands as the depiction of Utopia that Hawthorne critiques. While the gravitas that is attributed to her is earned, the severe treatment that she is attempting to warn against becomes overlooked by her community members. They view her primarily as a symbol of the goal and not the person that she is. The other side of this binary oppositional dichotomy is an exaggerated depiction of the corruptibility of the individual that surrounds the utopian community that they are attempting to create. She is an individual with a past and a history. Because of this, the idealization of her presence for the other characters changes how she asserts that individual power in interpersonal relationships. She is elevated as the ideal component that others lack and attaining it would create the utopia she represents. Coverdale manifests a different way that the individual is present in the creation of community by illustrating the relationship between the selfless pull toward social reform and selfish desire. Coverdale is the corruptibility to Zenobia’s idealization.

Coverdale operates with a heavy amount of personal bias but exists to highlight the lack of a real sense of self. He falls victim to Utopian Idealism, not as the object of it, but as the

enactor of it. In regard to the goal of the community, he criticizes it, stating, “The yeoman and the scholar – the yeoman and the man of finest moral culture, though not the man of sturdiest sense and integrity – are two individuals that can never be melted or weld into one substance” (Hawthorne 66). Coverdale feels that while he is following the idea of the goal, he does not feel that the goal is something that can exist. The opposition that he presents between the young and honorable yeoman and the cultivated scholar creates a sense that time is the only thing that can bring integrity to both. The fidelity that time provides creates a solidification of the impulsivity of youth or the yeoman and the theoretical sureness of scholarly pursuits. Without time, the maturity of ideas cannot be achieved. *Blithedale* engages a plot that illustrates this through the tendency toward selfishness and jealousy found in Coverdale. He lacks the development of self to achieve the goals that he aspires to. He has not reached the maturity of self to engage with the goals that he aspires to.

Coverdale himself is critical of the community over time, but helps conceive the idea with enough agreement to attempt to establish the community. His pull toward time away from the community is illustrated by “Being so pervious to air-currents, it was just the nook, too, for the enjoyment of a cigar. This hermitage was my one exclusive possession while I counted myself a brother of the socialists. It symbolized my individuality, and aided me in keeping it inviolate,” showcasing an oppositional attitude ingrained in the social fabric of the community (Hawthorne 99). The dream-like utopia that the members of the Blithedale community are attempting to create cannot function because it is not in an actionable position. Hawthorne’s critique manifests in the degree to which Coverdale operates as an obstacle for the community. David Diamond’s analysis of Coverdale highlights “a peremptory need to be the sole object of affection, a hypersensitivity to rejection, and a proclivity toward fantasy and obsession in the

place of determined action. In a deep stratum of his psyche lies a fragile sense of self,” and while all of these things are true, the fantasy component is the most significant (76). Any one of these things alone would prove detrimental to the goals of a community in Hawthorne’s provided context, but the focus on fantasy allows for the slow collapse of the community to fit fully in line with a pull toward practicality. The final reveal that Coverdale was infatuated with Priscilla only echoes that this utopian idealism could be established again. Zenobia’s symbolic representation of utopian goals is not being viewed as a character but as aspirations. In turn, the human element of the reform culture is undercut when she dies in the text. Hawthorne’s critique centers on the view of how to stop the cycle of utopian idealism by satirizing the reformers of his time.

The cycle of idealism has to change in order for society to resolve its issues. David Reynolds notes this development within reform figures: “After several leading movements had proven to be idealistically utopian, in the late 1840s and early 1850s there was a widespread effort to unify fragmented reformers through more ‘practical’ or realistic schemes” (Reynolds 129). The commentary that Hawthorne establishes, then, is accepted as an aspect of American creative expression and aesthetic resistance.¹ This feature of the early pieces of the American literary canon leads to this being accepted within the Folk canon.

Collectively, the themes of the Romantic period are just the common language of American creative expression. The Folk canon is synonymous with the cultural ideas that are present within the American literary canon. Folk implies that the themes of the literature can go beyond just the literary canon. Reynolds’s position that Romantic engagement with reform literature calls for practicality furthers the view that the individual’s function is a part of the creation of community. Because the creation of community relies on the individual’s

¹ See Rader 5.

functionality, practical steps create actionable change. Without the utility of action, reform cannot take place. The utility factor that is then created is adopted by American cultural expression not to deny the goal of utopia, but to temper it with realistic expectations. This is perpetuated across cultural expression and returns in the Folk music of the 1930s. The features that Hawthorne establishes in *Blithedale* are a leeriness toward utopian idealism. Through an exaggeration of emotional sentiment, Hawthorne finds a way of being critical without denying that the aims of reform cultures are valid positions to hold.

Woody Guthrie: Utopian Militancy

The themes of the Romantic period hold significant weight culturally due to their prevalence in the modern reiteration of Romantic expression. While the Romantic influence is not limited to these collections of genres and mediums, Hardcore music provides insight into the development of Romantic themes pretty succinctly. Music provides a method of analysis that shows how these ideas impact multiple levels of society. The timeless nature of these themes and cultural ideas encourages their further exploration. Harold Bloom, in *Anxiety of Influence*, discusses what this web of influence does over time: “It seems more likely that later visions cleanse themselves at the expense of earlier ones. But the strong dead return, in poems as in our lives, and they do not come back without darkening the living. The wholly mature strong poet is peculiarly vulnerable to this last phase of his revolutionary relationship to the dead” (139-140). Bloom’s point is that as themes get reiterated by new artists, they are dependent on that method of artistic expression. The cleansing, as Bloom states, creates art and artists that have the highest degree of strength and clarity. That strength is derived from the vulnerability of current art to the previous art and artists that operated with similar themes.

The web of influence that Bloom discusses is a foundational principle of how artistic works influence each other. Shifting from direct influence toward the concept of collective memory allows for a higher level of understanding of what influence creates. The web of influences provides concepts and methods that go on to build a cultural narrative around the concept of social critique. Kathrin Bachleitner, in “Collective Memory and the Social Creation of Identities: Linking the Past with the Present and Future,” introduces the ways in which memory functions both individually and collectively. In her discussion of Maurice Halbwachs, French philosopher and creator of the concept of collective memory, she states, “Halbwachs circumvents the necessity of distinguishing between individual and social components of remembering. Even if we remember alone, in the solitary spaces of our minds, memories are always recalled socially” (168). With the understanding that the individual and social memory are the same thing, people are able to look at the themes of a work or period as a communal concept. The communal nature of these themes further connects with the communal nature of music.

The key differences between literature and music are slight, but they create very different levels of immediacy and cultural impact or cultural appeal. This concept has been discussed by Gooding et. al. in “‘People Have Courage!’: Protest Music and Indigenous Movements,” and they point out,

Voice, in this sense, is understood to be the perspective of the textual aspects of the song, literally the ‘voice’ of the song. This voice can be specific, the words of the author of the song that others animate when they sing the song, or the author may have composed the song with a generic voice that can be animated by, and thus become not only the voice of the singers but the voice of any and all people. (385)

Whereas literature's voice is often perceived as the intention and thematics of a single author, music is both what the creator intends and what the audience brings into the dynamic with them. Music, similar to literature in an academic setting, allows for multiple voices to arise out of it. These additional voices are afforded an immediacy that, due to the participatory nature of music, is more readily engaged with. The protest message then becomes a presentational act and a participatory act for both the members of the band and the members of the audience. Their voices and emotions are all blended together as one ideological body. Where the Utopian Idealism, in *The Blithedale Romance*, is individuals thinking and resisting parallel to each other, music fuses the goals of the individuals with the goals of the community. This unity and practical method of engagement create Utopian Militancy.

The Utopian outlook alone, while useful, limits the possible avenues of engagement. Reformers utilize the ideological aspirations of self-reliance, connection to nature, and simplicity to draft an ideological framework for progress, but when used in situations like Brook Farm, it flounders. Hawthorne's awareness of utopian reformist cultures allows the artistic exaggeration that he utilizes in *Blithedale* to be so potent. The question of active utopian critique creates a call for practicality. Folk protest music's employment of the practical Utopian Militancy is the response to that call for practicality. Folk music is Protest music. Folk is a genre where the methods of instrumentation and vocalization are simple and predate the modern conception of the music industry. Folk and its employment of Utopian Militancy is a unified method of expression; in tandem, the lyrics and the music convey discontentment that is easily transferred and prescribes an avenue for resistance. That transferring of themes and goals from artist to audience is due to the participatory nature of music that Gooding et. al. discussed previously. Nicholas Carr in "“They Have Their Music and We Have Ours’: The Political Woody Guthrie”

states, “At a time when the romantic myths of the hobo life were being exploded all too obviously by the Depression, Guthrie pointed it out in song and used this to promote radical struggle by the underclass. His use of labor history tore at the fabric of received American history and pointed approvingly to a little-known tradition of militancy” (Carr 322). Borrowing the term militancy from Carr, Folk takes on a form of Utopian Militancy that borrows the themes of the Romantic reformers and adds to it the blending of voices found in music. This blending and sharing of goals and themes creates a shared intent for change between the artist and the listener. Due to the immediacy of the music medium, the goals feel attainable through engagement with and the creation of music. Utopian Militancy is the striving for social change through practical musical resistance.

This Utopian Militancy that is displayed by Guthrie and artists similar to him allows for the Folk genre to do quickly what the characters of *Blithedale* struggle to initiate without similar pitfalls. The ambiguity in Hawthorne’s *The Blithedale Romance* is given a practical response; this is due to the creation of shared goals and immediacy in music. Reform cultures or texts are asking for action to be taken, and the counter-cultural positioning of Folk music provides a path for actionable change. The actionable position is due to the concepts that Bloom and Gooding et. al. discuss; Folk takes the ambiguity of previous art and cleans it up. Then, when Folk applies their translation, they share their voice and fuse their voice with the voice of those engaging with the art. In doing so, they create a reform community around their musical interpretation of themes of social critique. The countercultural lifestyle of these communities explodes with a militant critique of the systems that perpetuate wealth disparities in America. The art and the artist serve a role that builds a community that pairs the utopian ideals of the past with the more

practical militant impulse. Utopian Militancy, as a feature of American social or political concern, becomes something that consistently presents itself across Folk music.

Woody Guthrie, within Folk music, is a touchstone for generations of artists. His imagery and lyrical content are within the vein of the kind of criticism of reform expression that Hawthorne advocates for. He is focused on the utility of the music and the solidarity of the working class. The artistic exaggeration is an invitation to discuss what is not right within the world. His song “Better World A-Comin’” situates itself as a call to arms against the objectification of individuals under poor labor practices: “I’m a union man in a union war, it’s a union world I’m fighting for” (1:02). Is a parallel representation of the role of the individual that Hawthorne is discussing. The shift from critique to militancy embeds a solution in the act of resistance. The act of resistance through protest music creates an understanding that the act is the creation of art. This is aided by the packaging of the protest act within a musical setting.

The lyrical expression of Utopian Militancy here is rooted in the values that Hawthorne expresses; Hawthorne illustrates that idealizing the goal without ensuring that the collective has ways of taking action leads to the goal not being achieved. The repetition of solidarity that Guthrie discusses in this piece, paired with the musical component, creates the participatory element that is lacking in Coverdale. The imagined togetherness that is on display within these lyrics is doubled by the backing vocals, furthering the ability for the audience to accept the invitation to join in on labor reform. Musically, the song starts with a steady pulsing rhythm that creates an almost hypnotic acceptance of the theme (Guthrie 0:11). The intro to the song does a little guitar lick that drops the listener in right as the vocals begin. Both as a text and a musical piece, “Better World A-Comin’” breaks the barrier between the artist and audience through

Compositional and Participatory Resistance.² Compositionally, the artistic choices and themes resist the labor issues of the time, and the participatory nature of the art form further illustrates that.

The simplicity of the Folk structure allows for the narrative of the protest song to be front and center. It is practically and simply stating that America needs reform. There is no mistaking it; there is no question about what that means. Guthrie is asking for laborers to support their unions and engage in a system that is meant to protect their rights as American workers. This aesthetic resistance fits in line with the goals of Hawthorne's community but provides steps to ensure that the goals are met. As a widely accepted member of the American literary canon, Hawthorne's critique of the reform cultures at the time passes into American expression as a touchstone. His texts and ideas are taught across generations, and his themes become the inciting idea that Folk derives its ethos from. Guthrie's employment of "farming, mining, the war, work, the melting-pot tradition, the very concept of 'the people,' ...aspects of American popular mythology" all are mirrored by the early elevation of labor, through artistic infusion, that the members of Blithedale employ (Carr 321). Hawthorne's acknowledgment of the problem leads to Guthrie's awareness of it and attempts to address it through Utopian Militancy.

This militant utopian call to action, while more practical in the engagement with the social reform that it calls for, is only effective in relation to the severity of the issues. Pattinson states that the defensive intention is present in Folk. The intention is to call for reform in the defense of the values, themes, and methods of expression that are central to the culture that they stem from: "The folk are pure, and being pure, they are possessed. Possessed, they are the guardians of our musical soul" (Pattinson 76). Folk music is an arm of the Folk canon that

² See Rader 5 and Gooding et. al. 385.

protects and promotes the culture that it is rooted in, but when the nature of social reform changes, creative expression has to adapt. Folk translates the ideas of the Romantic period and disseminates them pretty directly. The addition of practicality via Utopian Militancy is the only addition to those themes that it makes. The purity of the Folk expression is that it is the perceived center of a culture's expanding methods of cultural engagement. As it expands, the defensive aspect of it has to expand as well. With the rising intensity of social issues during the Cold War era, Folk began to change. One of Woody Guthrie's contemporaries, Paul Robeson, held similar ideological beliefs and used his artistic platform to promote labor reform, similar to Guthrie. His concert, culminating in the Peekskill Riot, resulting in the hospitalization of one hundred and fifty people due to Red Scare tensions, stands as a moment where the shift toward Punk begins (Lieberman 62). The power of the utopian militant community present within Folk was viewed as dangerous enough to elicit public violence. As both the local and global political tensions rise, the Folk revival under Bob Dylan and the Woodstock era artists is the staging ground for Punk to become the next populist protest expression in America.

Folk music's militancy is still rooted in the goals of whatever movement it is attached to. While Folk is not traditionally perceived as aggressive, it maintains its status of acceptability because, like Hawthorne, it fits within the culturally accepted narrative. Folk has attained a similar level of reverence as Hawthorne and the Romantics. Here, from a normative look, Utopian Militancy seeks to find a kind of productive struggle for a better society. This thematic outlook holds on for quite some time and begins to fragment around Woodstock.

Woodstock signals a shift in public consciousness, while Utopian Militancy is still a feature of Folk social critique; other methods of expression are starting to present themselves within the protest music space. In "Field of Tye-Died Dreams: How Woodstock Changed a

Generation,” Stephen Humphries discusses that a lot of the sentiment around protest music was full of optimism and the view that generally voicing social critique would lead to progress, but at the same time, there were the assassinations of civil rights leaders and antiwar protests across the country (2 -3). The world that the Woodstock festival ushers in mirrors Bakhtin’s point from *Rabelais and His World*, “through all the stages of their historical development, festivities were linked to moments of *crisis* and turning points in the life of nature, society and man” (10-11). The tensions that are present within the world in which Woodstock takes place mirror this point and create a desire to deal with the crises that were around them. With a subconscious reaction to the tensions of the civil rights movement and wartime-era anxiety, a shift takes place where the values of Utopian Idealism and critique, and the later Utopian Militancy, get inverted, and the Punk subgenre begins a social critique rooted in Apocalyptic Satire. This inversion of ideas creates a new American protest music with a higher degree of immediacy, potency, and strength. The precarious position of a Cold War-era America produces a generation of Punk musicians who want to call for reform, but ideas of utopia seem like a dissonant element when faced with the reality they live in. Similar to the function of Bakhtin’s carnivalized underworld, the Apocalyptic Satire of Punk acts as a soothingly abrasive form of musical expression and resistance (392-393). The focus on exaggeration to the furthest extent unifies the practical with the absurd.

Punk: Apocalyptic Satire

Hawthorne’s exaggeration of the Brook Farm experiment in *The Blithedale Romance* critiques Utopian Idealism. Folk utilizes the tensions of the time to create music that is generally characterized as peace music. The Utopian Militancy that is employed by the Folk artists hits at an underlying aggression that resists the labels that are often put on it and highlights Folk’s status

as a form of protest music. The spirit of the Romantic period developed over time to be represented by the Punk movement in the late seventies and early eighties due to a blending of the two previous forms of expression. Punk utilizes the exaggeration of the Romantics and the immediacy of Folk to create a dialogic engagement between the serious and the humorous. The humor that is created in the Punk genre is seen in the over-exaggeration of the societal pressures that it is discussing.

The Punk populist form of media highlights that satire, parody, and critique are all cut from the same cloth and are comedic representations of serious thought (Tahmahkera 14). This dual-voiced social critique then blends the harshness of reality with the absurdness present in the narrative. The goal here, in Punk, is to engage in a critique of the broader social situation while inviting others to share in the humor present in the tension that they are experiencing.

Where literature voices satire with confidence and with the status of the literary medium, music achieves this by taking that same satirical heritage and infusing it with a kinetic sense of vulgarity, authenticity, or absurdity. Pattinson discusses this shift by stating, “Modern culture has done nothing to disprove the surmise that advanced civilizations are fated to combine nostalgia and indulgence. The glorification of folk has proceeded in tandem with the rise of Romanticism. In rock the two are wed in a vulgar way” (Pattison 76). Vulgar is synonymous with uncultivated, as previously discussed. It is the wild originality of Hardcore musical expression. Prior to this, Pattinson outlines that the pantheism of music allows for things to be true and untrue about an art form. Pattinson’s use of pantheism as a connecting point between Romanticism and vulgarity within hardcore music does, at times, strip the value from the relationship between music and literature. Pattinson states, “In the language of logic, pantheism asserts that class which is a member of all classes, includes all classes, is identical with every class and also with each of its

members, and both is and is not a member of itself” (25). As it pertains to the discussion of literature and music, if these components reside and cannot reside in each other, then it muddies the waters of the discussion. He states that because Rock music is both Romantic and vulgar, people can interpret it in either vein, but that strips the value of the connective tissue between literature and Hardcore music.

The exaggeration of reform or self-indulgence, the core concepts behind Folk and Romanticism, respectively, creates a beautifully vulgar method of artistic expression. The vulgar expression takes on a voice that is focused on being an uncultivated and intense method of speaking truth to power. Pantheism allows for all aspects of literature and music to be present, but it discounts the influence between the two. A dual-voiced approach that Bakhtin discusses allows for the relationship between the mediums and genres to have value. Instead of different components of Punk, they all speak to how Punk can function. Bakhtin, in “Discourse in the Novel,” presents the idea that hybridized utterances have a codependent relationship between two “languages,” to use his words (361). Where pantheism strips the value from the connection between Romantic literature and Rock music, dialogic heteroglossia harnesses the relationship between the two and utilizes it to create value in both the text and the music. The presence of the hybridized utterances within Hardcore music is a choice that both actively and passively informs the creation of the next iteration of Romantic period themes. These songs are hybridized utterances because of their dependency on literary concepts, and literature still holds value because music perpetuates its message.³ Cultural values present in Hardcore music and Punk cannot exist without the history of creation that informed how they engage with social critique. Punk artists are speaking musically with the words provided to them by Romantic authors. The

³ See Bloom 139-140.

active choice to take Folk as an origin point for Punk leads to the retrieval of the Romantic impulses that were previously established by authors like Hawthorne. The question of social responsibility begins to manifest again as Punk.

Southern California Hardcore Punk bands The Circle Jerks and Black Flag are positioned as the next iteration of America's cultural engagement with the same question of social responsibility. Folk practicality and Utopian Militancy crumble under the weight of the rising violence of the nineteen-sixties and seventies. This leads to the rise of the punk nihilistic subculture and its Apocalyptic Satire as a vehicle for social critique. Looking at the Circle Jerks' "Killing for Jesus" provides a look at the ways Apocalyptic Satire functions musically. Bakhtin discusses this concept similarly with the concept of the carnivalized underworld, "The image of the underworld in folk tradition becomes the image of fear defeated by laughter, and this is, moreover, the image of a double fear: the fear of the mystical underworld itself (of 'hell' and of death) and the fear of past truth and power (still dominant but already dying), which has been cast down into the underworld" (392-393). The carnivalized underworld is the over-exaggeration of the societal fears to the point that there is a removal of the potency of fear. Punk's Apocalyptic Satire functions similarly; it sees the fears that make society strive for utopia and exaggerates them to the point that the world has already ended. Punk's laughter is at the fact that the utopian vision is already so far out of reach that the only thinkable course of action is to take comfort in the moment that the listener is in.

For a punk song, "Killing for Jesus" feels very much like a standard rock song, but within the Punk context it can only be understood as a humorous, exaggerated representation of the broader rock conventions. The song starts with an overindulgent wall of sound; the pick slide at 0:14 cuts through this and establishes the main steady rhythm guitar riff at 0:19. The riff's

country twang, coupled with the overly distorted pulse, provides a juxtaposition of the band's traditional sound with the joke that they are framing for the listeners. Keith Morris sings, "I want to blow them to pieces because I'm killing for Jesus" (Circle Jerks 1:12). His vocalization of the lyrics infuses the song with a parodic element; at the end of some of the lines, he jumps on the second syllable of the final word. This, to the listener, creates a kind of humorous engagement with an otherwise dark description of Christian evangelicals. The critique of Christianity in America highlights the negative components of the social system and exaggerates them to the highest degree. This is not practical, but similarly to how Hawthorne's characterization of Coverdale functions, it allows for the problem areas that need to be reformed to both be mocked and be called to the attention of the broader social consciousness. Where Coverdale is a doomed point-of-view character who is utilized to critique Utopian Idealism, and Guthrie utilizes practical Utopian Militancy to ease tensions of his time, Punk's Apocalyptic Satire attempts to tear down the entire situation with humor and absurdity.

Christians are not killing people en masse in America with a sense of superiority, but it is not hard to imagine that being the case. "With God on my side, the holy army's gonna ride," echoes the swaggering satire of the previous sentiment (Circle Jerks 1:33). This furthers the juxtaposition of Christian values with the ultra-violent nature of the public perception of Christian extremist groups. The hilarity of it calls to the mind of the listener the absurdity of the ways that Christians at the time engaged with the world around them. The Circle Jerks are calling attention to critical views of Christians in a way that elevates the negatives to apocalyptic levels of humor. This standard operating procedure within the Punk genre creates interesting opportunities for expression and reinterpretation. Black Flag's "I Love You" can be seen as a musical adaptation of *Blithedale Romance*.

Similar to *Blithedale*, the *My War* album is a piece that is highly concerned with the dynamics between the individual and social structures. The fourth track, “I Love You,” is written in the same vein as Coverdale’s characterization. The exaggeration of the emotional intensity within the song allows the listener to understand that this idealization of individuals is not a kind of emotional engagement that is socially accepted, but its existence undermines the social bonds of a community or a relationship. The song starts at 0:02 with a wailing bent note that abruptly places the listener within the context of the protagonist’s emotional state. At 0:17, there is a bridge between sections that can be viewed as a moment of lucidity before returning to the aggressive engagement with personal emotion. Henry Rollins sings, “I put my fist through the door, I hate myself for you, I love you” (Black Flag 0:19 – 0:25). The contradictions of emotion and action function as a cause and effect that are idiosyncratic in nature. The strange contradiction between what the individual feels versus what they are displaying creates a sense of danger. That is the core of Hawthorne’s critique; in an effort to reach utopia, the community in the text does everything to get further away from its goals. The individuals will map onto symbols that cannot sustain the weight of the idealism or militancy, a level of importance that will only crush them, leading to apocalyptic representations of social absurdities. Rollins, in “I Love You,” is attempting to salvage an idea of relationship by ensuring that the relationship ends.

Music is used to create a national identity and subcultural identity, but “Also, it should be pointed out that ‘national flavourings’ are by no means always nationalistic in intent or effect. The use of local colour is not always a celebration of the native culture” (Leerssen 620). The Folk in Leerssen’s understanding of building a national or cultural identity does not necessarily have a nationalistic intent. These cultural colors that are utilized have to be understood in order

to understand how all mediums within that branch of study function. To understand how Punk engages with the themes set up by the Romantic period, a person has to understand how the literature functions and how it remained salient until Folk pushed its themes into the hands of disenfranchised youth culture.

The recurring theme of social critique and protest here is both a cultural idea and a concept that pushes back against miscarriages of social justice. Musicians like Woody Guthrie, Circle Jerks, and Black Flag are all unified under this system of American Romantic concepts and evoke the themes with the immediacy that is afforded to music's populist status. These artists engage in the tradition of building community predicated on the experience of individual disenfranchisement. This personal offense leads to the creation of a community within the conventions of the genre or social movement. Punk's engagement with social critique is rooted in the same ethos as Folk music, but it can be mischaracterized by individuals who are not a part of the Hardcore subculture. This mischaracterization can be attributed to the Apocalyptic Satire that evolves from Folk. Punk's fixation on social critique is so focused on commenting on the exaggerated apocalyptic landscape that the artists do little to discuss the celebratory aspects of humanity. They artistically do not provide an acknowledgement of the individual's reaction to a perceived abusive system. The dialogic engagement between the two ultimately leads to Punk's loss of the Romantic spirit to Thrash Metal in the early eighties. Thrash Metal attempts to understand the individual's role within the reform space and is a reiteration of the same tension between the Dark Romantic authors and Transcendentalists.

The establishment of the Romantic impulses within the collective consciousness allows for the building of countercultural communities as a whole. Specifically, within the Hardcore community, these impulses and themes create the vehicle that is used to share and engage with

culture by all of the members of the collective memory. Folk, in turn, creates an immediacy to the social critique that persists due to the nature of musical expression versus literary expression. Music's immediacy is aided by its accessibility; it is the medium that most people will learn these concepts through first, and understanding its heritage expands the ways that people engage and go on to create for themselves. Folk is dependent on Hawthorne's call for practicality and is limited by that due to the rising intensity of social issues. Cold War paranoia adds pressure for Folk's expression to change and adapt to the intensity of the time. Punk shifts away from this straightforward engagement with the literary by shifting from Utopian Militancy to directly critiquing the absurd aspects of the social structures that have been established in an effort to meet the needs of people. Punk satirizes these systems to illustrate how, even though they are an answer to a problem, they still perpetuate systemic issues. Religion is a tool for building community, but to the Circle Jerks, it is a tool that instills fear in out-group members.

Similarly to *Blithedale*, the Punk movement goes on to pass on the questions and critiques that it states. Punk's focus on the collective effort of the Punk subculture still has the same problems that the Blithedale community represented. Artistically, they are focused on the collective effort to call out social injustice, but they neglect the human element of those causes. The Punk subculture starts to suffer from the same contradictions because of the weight of its success. The rebellious nature of the subgenre starts to buck against the limitations that it imposes on its members. Simple structure, apocalyptic messages, and satire start to limit the Hardcore space more than it helps answers questions from disenfranchised youth. The rise of Thrash Metal advocates for intricate musical structures, themes of celebration, and a level of gravitas that disrupts some of the conventions established by Punk.

This community-focused artistic expression cannot sustain itself once the community grows to the level of a subculture. It leads to the inauthentic creation of art for commodity purposes more than the purpose of the expression of social reform. This pull toward authentic engagement is what informs the creation of Thrash Metal as the new genre. In an interview I conducted with Henry Rollins, lead singer of Black Flag during the peak of their active recording and touring, he stated, “I’ve never understood or adhere to any rule that says if you do one thing in the creative realm, that you can’t do another, or quite a few, I can completely understand someone devoting themselves to a single activity like acting or musicianship, but I can obviously appreciate putting that general force into more than one discipline.” The individuals of the genre espouse critique against stagnation; the growth from Romantic literature, to Folk protest songs, to Punk visions of a post-industrial world, gives rise to the Metal expression of Individualism critiquing the packaged and commodified Rock music that crops up in the 1980s. The method of authenticity here is focused on taking the speed up along with the complexity of musicality and lyrical expressions of rage. In an effort to combat the weak sense of self that is characterized by the pull toward inauthentic conceptions of self, the next phase of this evolution warns against it further and with more immediacy. The Punk subgenre of Hardcore music establishes a lot of conventions that are propelled forward in subsequent subgenres. The immediacy that it utilizes is inherent within the music medium. Punk’s barking vocals and high-paced, simple musical structure are borrowed by later subgenres like Thrash and Groove Metal. While Thrash takes the vocal structure, Groove Metal takes on the simpler structure when compared to Thrash Metal’s intricate musicality. Romanticism acts as the foundation from which these thematic and musical conventions spring.

Through Primitive exaggeration of archetypes of individualism, Thrash seeks to fill in the gaps that Punk appears to have. The concept of the Primitive is the inversion of the ideas of the Apocalyptic. The Apocalyptic is the return to the Imagined Primitive, where the removal of social taboos results in primitive immediacy that is found in all subgenres of Hardcore Music. The Primitive will be unpacked further in my discussion of how it relates to Thrash and the shared language that it creates with Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

Chapter 2 - Yawpic Caricature: Evolution of Emersonian Sentiment from Whitman to Thrash

Hawthorne's Utopian Critique takes on a harsher immediacy as it develops into Folk's Utopian Militancy. The effectiveness of Folk is tied directly to the social issues that it is commenting on. With the intensity of the social issues rising, Utopian Militancy gets inverted and exaggerated into Punk's Apocalyptic Satire. Similarly, the critique that the Dark Romantics raise against the Transcendental position situates American literature in a hyper-individualistic and socially responsible binary. The Transcendentalist position of the power of the self and the responsibility to the self leads to the desire to shape the world by exploring the authentic self. In the aftermath of Punk's Apocalyptic Satire, Thrash Metal situates itself as the next important subgenre within the Hardcore music space. Thrash is a celebratory, authentic method of Hardcore expression with ties to Whitmanesque themes. The social concern that is present in the Dark Romantic subcategory creates a social awareness in a highly individualistic society.

The question remains: why, if the world is in a post-Punk apocalypse, would Thrash Metal be a celebratory assertion of the self? The push for authenticity that the Transcendentalists promote creates the tension between the celebratory impulse of the Transcendentalists and the social critique of the Dark Romantics. This tension leads to the shift from movement to movement or from impulse to impulse. The evolution from Transcendentalism to Thrash is rooted in looking for a space that provides the fire of authentic self-expression. Thrash Metal borrows from a shared language that is found in a primitivist lens. Robert Pattinson discusses the nature of this in *Triumph of Vulgarly*. In an effort to seek authentic expression, authors within the Romantic period view a lack of development as the path to self-understanding. Thrash does this through aggressive imagery and the inversion of meanings, where brutally unrestrained

emotional displays are their method of expressing hardcore truths about the human experience. Primitivism does have baggage that comes with it, due to the history of colonization, but it provides a shared language of the imagined base-state being seen as authentic.

The development of the Transcendentalist themes from literature to Thrash metal continues the trend of Primitivist narratives of false authenticity and exaggeration. Primitivist ideas are present in both the Romantic period and Hardcore music. The Primitive is used in both literature and music to build a basis of understanding concepts of the self. Here, the Primitive or the untamed are spaces that connect humanity so deeply to the perceived original ethos of existence. Because of this, primitivism unifies symbolic and practical aspects of identity. While this identity can be an authenticity rooted in the myth of the past, it still provides an entry point for self-exploration. These interpretations or possible misinterpretations, on the basis of a primitivist lens, provide Thrash audiences with a grotesque interpretation of Whitman's "barbaric yawp" (781). Through these primitivist archetypes, Thrash creates a short-lived engagement with the contradictions that Whitman celebrates. The reason that Thrash has to give way to later subgenres is because of its primitivist impulse, shared language, and binary oppositional contradictions of the Dark Romantic and Transcendentalist themes; this creates a Yawpic Caricature that ties romanticism to Thrash through shared archetypes, language, and celebration of contradictions, but the extent of the exaggeration requires resolution to those paradoxes in later subgenres. If that is true, then it is made clear that the creation of binary concepts limits the application of the Romantic themes.

Thrash Metal: Key Concepts and Emerging Paradoxes

The corporate rock that Thrash chose as an adversary was content to sell a musical commodity and not create community-focused art. Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, and Anthrax are

the touchstone bands for all other Thrash bands of that time period. For forty years, these bands, dubbed the Thrash Big Four, have held to the loud, fast, and rude ethos that they helped create. In Thrash, youthful wildness is at the core of both the art and the community. Thrash is a subgenre that was popularized in the early nineteen eighties by bands like Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, and Anthrax. Thrash Metal's virtuosity of musicianship was an extension of the themes of chest-beating individualism and primal rage. The Thrash artists adopt the straightforward approach of the earlier Hardcore punks, but utilize the instrumentation to create an "All posers must die!" mentality by illustrating that authenticity breeds strength and agency.⁴

Punk in its late stages finds itself in a similar gap that it fills with its social critique and Hardcore ethos. The effectiveness of its musical methods and themes starts to wane in the early eighties, leading to Thrash Metal. Thrash Metal or Speed Metal is characterized, today, as a fast-paced musical vehicle that takes the musicality of British New Wave of Heavy Metal bands like Iron Maiden and Motörhead and pairs it with the harsh vocal style of Punk.⁵ Where Iron Maiden's vocals are higher-pitched, bands like Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, and Anthrax take on a harsher edge. The Punk Apocalyptic Satire levied against the social collective neglects aspects of the self that lead to the creation of the Thrash Metal ethos. In this post-Punk apocalypse, Thrash stands as an aggressive celebration of the individual. Influenced by the British first wave of Heavy Metal and the American Hardcore punk of the So-Cal area, the Bay Area band Metallica formed in 1981 with James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich leading the band through multiple iterations (Dubin 7:12). Dave Mustaine's brief tenure in the band led to the creation of the signature sound that they are known for, before leaving to create the rival band Megadeth. The

⁴ See "Metallica – Cliff Burton and James Hetfield Final Uncut Interview – 1986".

⁵ See *Garage Inc.* by Metallica. This cover album is composed of covers from British Metal bands and Punk bands.

competition between Metallica and Megadeth is fueled by virtuosic speed and a search for authenticity achieved by Thrash Metal.

Thematically, Thrash is almost a one-to-one recreation of the Transcendentalist themes, but it exaggerates the self-assertion with its aggression and the immediacy of the musical medium. Thrash metal's introduction alongside Punk's decline in the early eighties pushes the boundaries of Hardcore expression and creates a counterpoint to the contemporary, commercially successful Glam Rock. Where Glam was full of presentation and showmanship, Thrash Metal artists were characterized as artists who walked in off the streets, ready to perform.⁶ The concern for the authenticity of the artist would characterize Thrash and the later subgenres like Groove Metal.

Read through the lens of Bakhtin's work on the carnivalesque and the grotesque, Glam would be the carnivalesque interpretation of Transcendentalist themes, and Thrash would be the Grotesque interpretation of the Transcendental sentiment. The exaggeration of the emotional themes would be seen as taking what the artist felt and pushing it past the boundaries of non-artistic depictions of rage. The exaggeration that underpins the concept of the grotesque is at the core of the Thrash Genre. Thrash is not loud; it is too loud. Thrash is not angry; it is brutal. It is an overexaggerated, grotesque medium of emotional expression. This exaggeration of rage creates an oppositional community against Glam metal. In the documentary *Murder in the Front Row: The San Francisco Bay Area Thrash Metal Story*, artists and fans discuss how the rivalry between Glam and Thrash was at the time. Thrash fan stated in regard to Paul Baloff, frontman for Thrash band Exodus, that "Baloff wasn't a singer when we met him. He was a headbanger just like us" (Dubin 17:06). Paul Baloff is a figure within the Thrash scene who represents

⁶ For example, Mötley Crüe is a counterpoint of hair, make up, costume, and suspended drum cages.

overall what the Thrash mentality was. Paul Baloff was a figure who believed in the authenticity and applied that belief aggressively. The disdain for the Glam or Hair metal contingent was a tribal boundary that was enforced in the industry by Glam and communally by Thrash's oppositional passion.

Baloff's commitment to the "all posers must die" mentality starts to hint at the underlying contradiction of Thrash's fixation with authenticity. Thrash loyalty, as seen by Baloff, is aggressive and applied almost strictly to members of the community. All other bands are kept from receiving that same support. James Hetfield, vocalist and rhythm guitar player for Metallica, stated this in regard to Thrash loyalty, "There were fans that had patches of, obviously their favorite, bands on and what not. They would show how much they liked the bands or didn't like the band. They just quietly turned, and that was, I guess, silent protest" (Dubin 24:10). James discusses how fans would turn their backs on bands if they felt they were not up to par; these bands were often Glam Metal bands from the L.A. scene. The perceived lack of originality or authenticity is a barrier to entry in Thrash, but what they celebrate and promote all hold similar characteristics. They are building community around authentic expression and, in doing so, creating a genre and pathway to the same monotony that they are raging against. The creation of Thrash's sound starts as an individual's form of authentic expression, and it leads to the creation of a community that will fight to protect it. The bigger that Metallica and Thrash get then leads to the same oversaturation that normalizes the sound and then ultimately makes it feel inauthentic.

Thrash takes Whitman's yawp and turns it into a Yawpic Caricature. Thrash creates the caricature of Whitman's Yawp by characterizing itself as the primitive alternative to Glam metal.

This Primitive impulse is rooted in the use of the Imagined Primitive. The Imagined Primitive in this instance is the archetypal rebellious spirit that Whitman employs in his own work.

Leaves of Grass: The Shared Language of Literature and Thrash

Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* focuses on the boundaries of the self and the collective. His depiction of the b'hoy archetype and its relationship to understandings of beauty and authentic expression highlights his connection to Thrash Metal. In Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, he states, "When Whitman turned from contemplating the transfiguration of common humanity through sacrifice to celebrating the rare individual, the poet as prophet, he could expand into the pride that annihilates all valid distinctions between the actual and the ideal" (545). Whitman's fixation on drafting the common individual and elevating the mundane is a feature that is important to understanding how Whitman makes sense of the world around him. The recreation of the world around him establishes more of the Imagined Primitive that Thrash would later employ. David Reynolds, in *Beneath the American Renaissance*, expands on the concept of the individual that Whitman utilizes: "By definition, the b'hoy was in part a devilish figure whose defiant wickedness represented a healthy alternative to effete or artificial social conventions" (513). Reynolds's characterization of Whitman's b'hoy archetype is represented in a number of figures that are present in *Leaves of Grass*. The celebration of the rebel figure in society creates a culture that champions the underdog and the outcast. These features are established through primitivist language and archetypal understandings of the self.

Primitivism is a term that has a lot of concepts and ideas, both useful and misguided, tied to it. One of the more interesting components to the connection between Thrash and Transcendentalism is the shared language that it affords both the Romantic period and Hardcore music. Thrash Metal is a genre that utilizes words like savage and wild synonymously with

authentic and original.⁷ That is the primary use factor of the Primitive. While the primitivist lens has been used to create harmful archetypes like the noble savage and to create a civilized vs. primitive narrative, the cultural misconception and prevalence of these concepts create an archetype of the rebel. This archetype of the rebel or the b'hoy is a version of primitivist authenticity.⁸ It is something that culturally people believe in, but it is based on potential and oftentimes factual misconceptions of the concept of originality. The use of these archetypes leads to the employment of the Imagined Primitive. The Imagined Primitive is the same instance of potential or factual misconceptions of originality. Much like the noble savage trope is an out-group interpretation of the origin of a people group, the archetype of the b'hoy and the rebel function under that same misconception of the Primitive being the authentic expression of the individual. Here, it is used as a method of understanding the authentic self, but it is misguided in its understanding of what that is in reality.

Thrash's ties to primitivism do come with their own baggage. Pattinson, in *Triumph of Vulgarity*, does reference the adoption of African American Blues as a way for White musicians to gain credibility and adopt characteristics of racial stereotypes. Pattinson states, "In the white man's imagination, he is only a few generations from the jungle and therefore the perfect candidate to be the realization of the Romantic idea of the primitive" (39). Pattinson's connection illustrates the damaging potential that a primitivist interpretation can have, but it also illustrates the core problem of the Imagined Primitive. The member of the artistic circle adopts what they believe to be the origin point of the art that they enjoy, and in doing so, creates a simulated form

⁷ See the song "Weirdo Man" by Uncle Slam. Inversion of meaning highlights lack of social cultivation as a point of praise.

⁸ Reynolds on 514 discusses the same counter cultural principles that a lack of cultivation presents.

of expression that they believe to exist. In actuality, they perpetuate and give voice to a harmful archetype and narrative.

Regardless of intent, the primitivist method of engagement creates problems for the goal of authentic expression. Consequently, if primitivism is getting at the heart of the issue or striving to find the authentic perspective, in doing so, the Imagined Primitive is created. The Imagined Primitive is people trying to find a sense of authenticity in archetypes or stereotypes. The focus on the archetypes to learn about the self leads to unresolved contradictions and potentially inauthentic expression. In “Primitivism Now, Primitivism Again: Introduction” by Ben Etherington and Samuel J. Spinner, they illustrate that while primitive is a word that by definition means the original state, it also has been used as a method of building colonial narratives (129, 130). The duality between understanding origins and creating damaging narratives of control is present within the concept of the Primitive. They go on to state that understanding primitivism creates a need for a commitment to ethical use and an awareness that this has been used to “ramify the harmful frameworks that have informed so much primitivist art and thought” (131-132). Because primitivism is an approach that is utilized by an out-group, typically, a primitivist approach in all of its limitations is analogous to the commitment to authenticity that is ingrained in Romanticism and Hardcore music. If members of the two periods are always calling for authentic expression, then they are striving for something that they fundamentally have limitations in understanding. So, the expression based on primitive interpretation leads to paradoxes of self-understanding.

A large number of figures within the American Romantic period are some offshoots of the b'hoy archetype. Ahab is a figure who operates as a commentary on the dangers of the b'hoy when left unchecked; Zenobia acts as a figure that challenges social conventions, effectively a

g'hal counterpart to the masculine b'hoy.⁹ These characters bolster the representation of the rebel b'hoy archetype until it is so ingrained that rough characters are easily palatable within an American cultural context. Thrash later employs the b'hoy archetype as the rebellious spirit and mythos that they craft for their members and musicians; Thrash musicians just call it the metalhead.

Archetypes are the essential images and ideas that surround a concept like the self or a hero; all archetypes have a soup of ideas attached to them. In understanding how archetypes are utilized, artists and audiences share an understanding of how the world of the text works and how, generally speaking, our own world works. In "Are Archetypes Essential?" by Warren Colman, he discusses the origin and applications of Jung's theories on archetypes: "all the things that exist have a primary essence that makes them what they are. Archetypes as Jung conceived them are undoubtedly essentialist in this sense since they are, by definition 'pre-existing psychic images'" (339). Colman's point that the history of the archetype is the preexisting information that all individuals have in their minds creates a useful understanding of how Thrash engages in its relationship with Romanticism. These ideas are the cultural touchstones that people operate with and utilize to create art. Within that intellectual engagement with the unconscious, people think they are singular individuals, but they are engaging with generations of people who have created similar concepts, characters, and pieces of music.

The binaries that are present within Whitman and Hardcore present a tension due to the nature of their meaning. The concern that both time periods have with the concepts of the self and community, or the body and soul underscore why these concepts lead to the creation of opposing viewpoints. While these themes are significant, the proposed binaries that they

⁹ See Reynolds 513.

establish fail to capture the nuance of the concept. The individual derives meaning from the community and vice versa; the same can be said about the body and soul. Whitman's focus on the development of the self through a mystic or religious sense mirrors the imagery that most genres of Hardcore music utilize. He achieves this by investing in archetypal depictions of humanity that he feels depict authentic selfhood. This shared impulse illustrates again his utilization of the cultural historical information that he carries with him, "The obvious traces of Quakerism in the expression of his vision here may not seem many, although the sect's bare and simple separation between 'body' and 'soul' may well have conditioned his way of talking about these as distinct entities, and have impelled his search for a harmony between them" (Matthiessen 536). Whitman's upbringing within a Quaker community creates an interest in the boundaries between the body and soul; his consistency in discussing the difference and balance between the soul and body mirrors the distinctions that often create a dissonance between the concept of music as an individualistic art form and a collective art form.

While these themes support the development of one side of their respective dichotomies, they also provide meaning and boundaries for the other. The dissonance that is present is supplied by the internalized tension between the archetype of the self being a communal concept. Whitman's efforts to understand those boundaries parallel playing with Jung's archetypal theory. The soul, as a stand-in term for the archetype of the self, is a form of engagement with the collective unconscious. Whitman's interest in the boundaries between the body and soul, stemming from his upbringing, further suggests that he is engaging with the collective unconscious.

Kathrin Bachleitner discusses this in "Collective Memory and the Social Creation of Identities: Linking the Past with the Present and Future" and highlights that while individual

memory is recalled socially, creative expression creates an entry point to understanding the broader collective (168). This is true due to the collective cultural themes that are present within society, but the tension is then located in the individualistic impulses that are collectively shared. Both sides of the dichotomy can be argued, but that furthers the understanding that the concepts themselves have value because of what they are and what they are not. Without individuals, a community cannot be formed. Without collective cultural themes, art cannot be created. Without a soul the, body cannot function. That tension in these binaries creates a desire to distinguish one self, but it also leads to the paradoxical engagement with the socialized self.

Whitman discusses the nature of beauty and unifies concepts of the vulgar and the beautiful to synthesize a position that rests between the Dark Romantic critique and the Transcendentalist perspective. Robert Pattinson defines the vulgar as the “absence of cultivation,” and what that affords Whitman is the leveling of ideas of value (5). The romanticization of the lack of cultivation implies that the value is inherent within the existence of the object. While vulgar is Pattinson’s term, it can also be synonymous with wild or uncultivated. He does this through the elevation and simplification of paradoxical beliefs. *Leaves of Grass* consistently represents aspects of life that are not, in a traditional sense, beautiful.¹⁰ Whitman States, “Because you are greasy or pimpled – or that you was once / drunk, or a thief, or diseased, or rheumatic, or a / prostitute – or that you are no scholar, and never saw / your name in print ... Do you give in that you are / any less immortal?” (783). Whitman’s utilization of the beauty in the mundane or grotesque suggests that the beauty of life is represented everywhere. He takes what would be considered the vulgar components of a society and elevates them to an immortal status that he feels every human has ownership of. His elevation of the b’hoys archetype

¹⁰ I’m utilizing the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* due to its energetic tone. This pairs well with the analysis of Thrash’s early days as a youth culture.

and utilization of what larger society views as the dregs create a culture that promotes and celebrates the wild, vulgar components of life.

The b'hoy is utilized by the Punks to critique the world around them, but the Thrash Metal community takes this in a manner that is more in line with Whitman's original intent of celebration. Whitman emboldens of the beauty in the depictions of wild humanity, "Hurrying with the modern crowd, as eager and fickle as any, / hot toward one I hate, ready in madness to knife him; / solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone / from me a long while, / walking the old hills of Judea with the beautiful gentle god" (Whitman 756). The juxtaposition that Whitman offers between manic aggression and divine bliss highlights the moral and immoral aspects of the b'hoy archetype. He is depicting an individual who is full of righteous anger and respect for the cosmic powers of the universe. This depiction of chaotic humanity allows Whitman to unify the way people are and the ways people aspire to be without calling either one out from a moral perspective. Whitman allows for the contradictions to exist and soothes the self.

David Reynolds comments on the implementation of the b'hoy in a way that highlights the difference between the Romantic sentiment and the later Apocalyptic Satire of the punks: "they all involve the suffering of human beings, whereas such image strings in popular humor inevitable[ly] mingle the human and nonhuman with the effect of desecrating the human. Whitman restores full humanity to the American grotesque" (519). Reynolds discusses the restoration of humanity in relation to the depiction that Whitman crafts of humans in "The Sleepers," but this is mirrored here in his listing of greasy, pimped individuals and the aggressive impulses of the poem's narrator.

The juxtaposition that Whitman creates by naming the perceived lack compared to a scholar also illustrates the self-awareness and self-criticism that can come with occupying a

lower social status. The immediate calling out that Whitman does by stating the subjects of his poetry are just as immortal as everyone else stimulates the aspirational nature of being a human. The human behind the grotesque character of the drunk and ill-educated is given a space that allows for the beauty of their humanity to shine with power and authenticity. The barrier and classification of the people is of no consequence when the truth of the self is understood completely, “Great is goodness; / I do not know what it is any more than I know what health / is But I know it is great. / Great is wickedness I find I often admire it just as / much as I admire goodness: / Do you call that a paradox? It certainly is a paradox” (Whitman 833). The final few lines of the poem address the complicated truth of humanity. Humanity is great due to the multiple positions that it can hold. The chaotic element of human nature is what creates its beauty. If a drunk and a scholar are both deserving of immortality, then the greatness of each of them is innate in their existence.

The paradoxes that every person has to confront in their lives do not have to be reconciled because that is the natural state of the world that people navigate through. Elevating the status of the individual blurs the boundaries between classifications of class, status, and morality. Whitman furthers that same blurring of boundaries by stating famously, “I too am not a bit tamed ... I too am untranslatable, / I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world. / The last scud of day holds back for me, / It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the / shadowed wilds, / It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk” (781). Whitman here has blurred the boundaries of social classification and hierarchy, and now he takes the time to shatter the conception of limitation and boundaries of what the self is. His animalistic assertion of the self is utilized both as an assertion of the self and an acknowledgement that the self is a natural feature

that cannot be separated from its animalistic root. The phrase barbaric yawp further blurs the boundaries between civilized and primitive.

The use of barbaric yawp creates an aggressive image of self-assertion. The words that are utilized here tie it to the kind of expression that Thrash would later incorporate. Bands like Sweet Savage tie their identity to aggression. Bands like Slayer and Metallica employ high levels of inverted meaning. Being barbaric becomes a label of pride; being brutal becomes something that is celebrated and seen as a form of authentic emotional expression. The same inversion of meaning is seen in the relationship with violence that Mark Osegueda, vocalist for Death Angel, discusses in regard to Thrash band Exodus, “Exodus just owned, and the pits were violent as hell, it was just – it was glorious” (Dubin 38:01). The barbaric yawp that Whitman uses as his assertion of self, gets pulled through time to the mosh pits of San Francisco and is enacted by hundreds of teenagers attempting to understand their own divine individualism.

The reiteration of the barbaric yawp, in Thrash, is a feature of exaggeration that is in line with the creation of the grotesque or exaggerated wildness that will be utilized heavily by the Thrash Metal musicians. Matthiessen comments that Whitman’s creation of this symbolic positioning creates a situation that is “Comparable to those of the primitive ritualistic singer, the full gesture of his united body and spirit. And this ‘dance’ carried him far beyond the limits of his conscious self into groupings of association of the sort released most readily in dreams” (573). The call that the Thrash musicians make to their community readies them and steadies them for a dance of self. The pit is a place where an individual learns what they react to musically and thematically, and they also learn that their self has company in that rageful expression. What is interesting within this dichotomy is that while it is a unification of the body and spirit, it is high in aggression and typically seen as a precarious union of the two. Simon

Critchley discusses the unification in *Mysticism*, he states, “The way of negation works through two tactics: contradiction and antithesis on the one hand, and excessive accumulation of speech on the other. Negation and exaggeration at once. And at the same time” (91). The paradoxical engagement with the self and community leads to the understanding of the self through contradiction and exaggeration. The people in that room are individuals, and they are a part of a community. They do feel anger, and they are given permission to express that through consensual aggressive dance.

With the self and the body acting as one, it creates the understanding that the individual unifies the authentic with the practical to a degree that the oppositional binary represents the spirit of Emersonian sentiment. What creates tension between Whitman and Metallica is the misunderstanding that the Yawpic action and aesthetic were never meant to be prolonged; it was intended as a momentary assertion of the self. This leads to a contradiction logically, but spiritually, it is an invitation to seek to understand. Without the oppositional dichotomies, a person cannot understand the themes that both Romantic authors and Hardcore artists are working with. To understand the self, you have to understand what the self is not. The same can be said for community. The same can be said in regard to Literature and Hardcore. There are minor differences that provide meaning to the opposite side of the argument, but their functions are more similar than dissimilar.

Leaves of Grass's dependency on democratic philosophy roots the thematic focus on individualism in the social fabric of society. The musical evolution furthers the investigation of that same core thematic idea. The primitivist addition to Whitman's vulgar elevation of the basic creates a crucial mischaracterization of Whitman's yawp but is a call to action that will revitalize the immediacy of Hardcore music in the early to mid-eighties. Thrash encourages that same

engagement, but exaggerates it to a level that cannot be sustained. Hence, the reason that Thrash is significant, but short-lived. The lines, “Great are yourself and myself, / We are just as good and bad as the oldest and youngest or / any, / What the best and worst did we could do, / What they felt .. do not we feel it in ourselves? / What they wished .. do we not wish the same?” focuses the attention of the reader on the universality of the experiences of each person and promotes a sense of unity through individualism (Whitman 831). The addition of a primitivist or wild impulse on the part of the Thrash Metal artists and fans creates a space where that same energy and thematic sense underpin all displays of artistic aggression and resistance against the downplaying of the self or the community. The reinterpretation of primitivist language is equivalent to the line “All posers must die.” This rallying cry takes the primitivist pull for authentic engagement and situates it in the early 80s Thrash scene.

What Thrash metal and Romanticism do, then is invest in the Imagined Primitive. The self is an archetypal concept that cannot be directly engaged with. When something can only be engaged indirectly, people are attempting to define authenticity by archetypal understanding. The narrativization of the world through archetypal understanding then creates a commitment to those archetypes and a perpetuation of the binary opposition that is present in Dark Romantic and Transcendental artists.

Metallica’s *Kill ‘em All*: Mischaracterization of Whitman Highlights Contradictions

Metallica’s 1983 debut album, *Kill ‘em All*, focuses on themes of aggression, strength, and the self. The song “Motorbreath” acts as an 80s reinterpretation of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*. The dialogue between the two time periods and artists furthers the understanding that the Romantic nature of American expression is rooted in the tension between the self and the

collective. Punk's neglect of the self creates Thrash as a balancing measure within the Hardcore Music Genre.

While the Punk subgenre situates itself as a mirror against social issues, Thrash shares Whitman's focus on the inner self. The focus on the inner self is shared by the Transcendentalists and Thrash musicians. Thrash Metal's focus on the self as the key feature of community is rooted in a fixation on the thematic content present in Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself." The parallel usage of Transcendentalist ideas allows listeners to understand how Transcendentalist themes are reinterpreted for the 1980s. By understanding the genre, listeners see that the Primitive or uncultivated impulse leads to the prioritization of authenticity, but this is limited by the fact that all examples of authentic expression are based on archetypes of individualism. Each time these archetypes are used, they are exaggerated further and further, resulting in the over-the-top Yawpic Caricature that Thrash Metal utilizes.

The themes of the self and individualism in Romantic period literature have shifted to Thrash Metal music. The strong commitment Thrash has to the themes of individualism has created a similar situation to Punk's commitment to social critique. Both subgenres address one half of the social or individual issues that it hopes to fix. Thrash's focus on the self as a sovereign entity promotes the view that the individual has the answers to life's struggles within themselves. Davis and Sangster, in "'Load Every Rift': Power, Opposition, and Community in Romantic Poetry and Heavy Metal," establish the connection between metal music and Romantic period lit by arguing that themes of power and resistance tie them together, but argue that the main separating factor is that literature allows for more self-expression and music is primarily a communal experience (296). When looking at the methods that Whitman utilizes in *Leaves of*

Grass, it creates the understanding that these two methods of aesthetic resistance are more similar than dissimilar.

Metallica's first album, *Kill 'em All*, operates in parallel with *Leaves of Grass* through the use of rebellious archetypes of the Imagined Primitive, shared language, and contradictions. Robert Pattinson notes the origins of Primitivism in *Triumph of Vulgarly*: "The source of rock is the primitive as interpreted by vulgar, democratic Romanticism, and the white man's motive for adopting the primitive is the desire to be moved, to get real, real gone for a change" (87). This adoption, as noted by Pattinson, creates an engagement with the themes that allows their potency to increase. The musical vehicle of expression holds an immediacy that requires simplifying the methods of presentation. The wild or grotesque elements of music create an engagement that creates a potent expression, but they also leave room for misinterpretation of the Romantic intent. The stripping away of the social critique that was previously held as the core ethos of Punk reveals Thrash Metal's animalistic celebration of the individual. The community that it creates is focused on the wild impulse to beat their chests and assert that they are alive. This is highlighted in "The Four Horsemen" from Metallica's *Kill 'em All*. The album overall jumps between gothic images of religious iconography and discussions of Thrash Culture. This piece blends the two with a song that sets a blinding pace and discusses the tensions that the individual projects onto outside entities like the four horsemen. James Hetfield's vocal phrasing of the line, "Lock up your wife and children now. It's time to wield the blade," is shrieked with a lack of vocal cultivation (0:37). This vocal style, or lack thereof, pairs with the lyrical content to illustrate a situation where violence is used as a defensive solution. The adoption of the primitivist or uncultivated approach, artistically, yields a higher level of aggression lyrically, but the musical complexity juxtaposes the binary oppositional features of both the Romantic period

and the Hardcore music subgenres. The baggage and limitations of the Imagined Primitive that Thrash has led to the short-lived nature of the genre. The genre lasts for about five years before it gives way to other forms of hardcore expression.

The impulse for Whitman, and later the Thrash musicians, is to search for their place in relation to the world around them. They are also searching for meaning in the internal world that they are coming from. This is furthered by the song “The Four Horsemen” when James barks during the bridge of the song several concepts that the individual reconciles during their time on earth, “Time taking its toll on you. The lines that crack your face. Famine, your body, it has torn through. Withered in every place. Pestilence for what you’ve had to endure and what you have put others through. Death, deliverance for you, for sure. Now there’s nothing you can do” (3:22). The dark evaluation of these concepts, coupled with the rugged archetype of the song’s protagonist, illustrates that the ideas of life are crushing, but through exaggerated individualism, people learn how to overcome. The method of utilizing the archetype of the rugged individual leads to the creation of a performance of what artists and fans believe to be the individual. Whitman utilizes the b’hoi archetype as a way of presenting what he believes to be a kind of authentic self-engagement (Reynolds 513). The use of rebellious archetypes is mirrored by Thrash in the heroes that they elevate to legendary status. James Hetfield, vocalist and rhythm guitarist for Metallica, elevates another musician in his discussion of Thrash bass player Cliff Burton, “Cliff represented the Bay area. He represented freedom. He represented a freakiness that I didn’t know so much growing up in L.A.” (Dubin 25:43). Similarly to how Reform literature and Punks drew on a sardonic detachment to the characters and personas that they created, Whitman and Thrash take what they believe to be the ideal form of humanity and raise it to the status of the archetypes that they utilize to create and understand individualism.

Just like the Primitive or mythic impulse is to raise stories of origin or basic iterations of humanity, Thrash and Romanticism's impulse to aggrandize archetypical understandings of the individual creates a caricature of perceived authenticity. With Thrash being a communal music, all of these individuals then build a community of the narrative of individualism, or as I have stated, a community based on Yawpic Caricature. Each member of the Thrash community sees the narrative of the rebel and performs it until it is exaggerated and made grotesque in the genre of Thrash Metal.

The soul or the self, then, is cast as the individual that informs pockets of the larger collective and derives meaning from external social stimuli and the internal collective consciousness. Whitman's focus on these two concepts achieving a balance is the promotion of the soul as a feature of the body. The balance that Whitman is discussing parallels the individual as a feature of the collective. Davis and Sangster discuss how music is a vehicle for unification that blurs the lines between the listener and the band's performance: "Metal's power, here, is its melting together of band and audience through music that is Dionysian in its binding of pleasure and pain. Power in Romantic poetry, however, tends to be multitudinous" (292). The interesting feature of music as a vehicle for unification is the blurring that it does at every level. Metal's fixation with rage and mirth blurs the lines between the two. The use of the term Dionysian also focuses this union on both exaggerated senses of madness and ecstasy. Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* discusses how the blurring functions with the concepts of the grotesque and the carnivalesque. Bakhtin states, "The grotesque has to do solely with *bulging eyes* (for instance, in the grotesque scene we analyzed featuring the stutterer and Harlequin), as it is interested in anything that *protrudes, bursts out or sticks out from the body*, anything that seeks to go out beyond the body's boundaries" (313). Bakhtin's exaggeration of form can be represented by the

exaggeration of the emotional content of the Thrash genre. The weight of the emotions is intensified to the point that it is a caricature of the underlying emotion. The exaggerated rage further unpacks the Dionysian elements of the art form, where the rage is only as intense as it is blissful.

The paradoxical emotional engagement of Thrash creates a sense of the vulgar or grotesque self. As it is presented in Whitman, his pantheistic beliefs infuse beauty into what would be considered broadly vulgar or grotesque. In Thrash, it is the internal grotesque expression of emotion. The intensity of the genre is characterized by a high level of speed; this sonic assault stimulates a loss of emotional inhibition, and the lyrical content promotes engagement with the aggression that is socially considered taboo. The themes of rage exaggerated to the point of celebrating identity fall in line with Bakhtin's view of the joy present in grotesque rebirth after death (50-51). Whitman and Metallica both engage with a blending of primitive or uncultivated impulses through their employment of archetypes, the language that they utilize to depict and celebrate the world around them, and the contradictions that they illustrate. Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Metallica's *Kill 'em All* both stand as key examples of the creation and recreation of Romantic themes and paradoxes. Whitman establishes the blurry relationship between the self and the community, and Thrash benefits from those conventions a generation later.

Metallica's 1983 debut album *Kill 'em All* is a very different album from the commercially successful self-titled album that would come later in 1991. Where the self-titled album was radio-friendly and featured ballads like "Nothing Else Matters," *Kill 'em All* is a touchstone for the ethos of Thrash. Metallica's first studio album follows the genre conventions of harsh, fast guitar playing and machine-gun-fire-paced drums. The vocals are borrows from

punk and offer a direct message with the addition of urgency and speed. Thrash Metal as a genre borrow from Hardcore punk and adds the intricate riffs found in the bands that preceded them, like Iron Maiden, Motörhead, and Black Sabbath. Track three of *Kill 'em All*, “Motorbreath,” begins with a thunderous percussive gallop on the drums.

With brutal hammering of the rhythm guitar James Hetfield barks the chorus, “Motorbreath is how I live my life. I can’t take it any other way. Motorbreath a sign of living fast. It is going to take your breath away” (Metallica 0:47). The statement of a hard partying lifestyle is not a glorification of the lifestyle, but a statement of ability to endure. Metal as a whole is often classified as dark and brooding, but this song’s themes of self-confidence and the beauty of vulgarity operate as a grotesque exaggeration of Whitman’s self-assertive celebration. Where Whitman celebrates with vulgarity and pantheism, Metallica and Thrash metal, generally, utilize a grotesque celebration that exaggerates the celebration that Whitman engages in. Thrash is not a celebration of contradictions, but the embodiment of exaggerated contradictions. James Hetfield has taken the b’hoi archetype and imposed it onto the image of the Metalhead archetype. They are both the hard-living, morally upstanding, vulgar ideas of authenticity. Before returning to the chorus James’s voice punches through a drum fill calling to action, “Those people who tell you not to take chances, they are all at missing what life’s about. You only live once so take hold of this chance. You’ll end up like others same song and dance” (Metallica 2:13). Metallica’s call to trust the iron string within the self and push limitations until there are none echoes the history and culture that the transcendentalist help establish. Musically, the blinding speed of the thrashing solos of Kirk Hammett, written by former lead guitarist Dave Mustaine, is the true yawpic chest-beating component of the song. While the rhythm section holds the intensity of the piece at 0:44, the musical break at 0:54 stimulates the listener to feel

the power and pride that the lyrics are discussing. Each individual musically displays the intensity and beauty of selfhood. The bending distorted note at the start of the solo at 1:40, immediately followed by staccato punching notes, is the same messiness of individualism. To be an actualized self is to know the pain and power that resides within the self. The contradiction of the positive and negative is not an admonishment on that tensions presence, but a call for the individual to reconcile the contradictions within themselves.

The final track of the album does something interesting after championing the individual in “Motorbreath.” The final track, “Metal Militia,” breaks down the understanding of how community functions. “Metal Militia” acts as a parallel to the Punks’ focus on community and their apocalyptic-satirical presentation, but it shifts the focus away from social critique to the celebration of the individual’s experience within the community. The track parallels the method of approach that the Circle Jerks used in their song “Killing for Jesus,” but the ending result is a different strain of the same Apocalyptic Satire (Metallica 1:17). Here James’s shrieking vocals call for a unity and echoing of the pride that him and his band mates feel in their identity as Metal musicians, “We are as one as we all are the same, fighting for one cause. Leather and metal are our uniforms, protecting what we are. Joining together to take on the world with our heavy metal. Spreading the message to everyone here. Come let yourself go” (Metallica 4:05). The narrative that is being created is akin to founding myths; the piece notes aspects of the community that are normative and elevates them to sacred armor that promotes unity and safety for members thereof. The blurring of the boundaries between individual and community creates a sense that every member is an extension of one individual. The shift in understanding is further supported by the previous lyric, “The Metallization of your inner soul, twisting and turning. Oh, through the mist and the madness, we are trying to get the message to you. Metal Militia”

(Metallica 2:37). The yawp that is taking place both in “Motorbreath” and “Metal Militia” achieves the potency and immediacy that Punk held at one point. Similarly, to Punk’s tenure as the most significant Hardcore genre, the potency or immediacy lasts briefly within Thrash Metal. Thrash lasts about five years, from 1981 to 1986; after this, it starts to feed the development of Groove metal’s rise in the late 80s and early 90s. Metallica’s exaggeration of the b’hoi figure creates a community of engagement around it and leads to the creation of a shared identity. Because it is founded on a story, it functions as a shared myth, and the celebration of it can only last as long as that contradiction will allow it to. Where Hardcore punk critiqued the society that it was a part of and the subculture that it established, “Metal Militia” celebrates the aggressive community that promotes art through rageful celebration of their shared aggressive individualism. Thrash’s commitment to authentic engagement with art and the self creates a paradoxical relationship with community; this again is what I would call the Yawpic Caricature of individualism. If the self is the only thing that matters, why create a community around that idea? The reality of the Thrash community then is that they are defending authentic expression, but in doing so, they force group homogeneity. This reality illustrates the circular argument that leads to other subgenres attempting to resolve the question of what authentic expression is.

Whitman and Thrash Metal are tied so closely to a celebratory ethos or creed. The general tone of each, while at times depicting wild and grotesque imagery, celebrates the nature of existence. They both celebrate their ability to take up space and engage with what it means to be human in all its aspects. Pattinson, in *Triumph of Vulgarly*, states, “In this rock is another stage in the progress of Romanticism. But rock goes two extra steps. Rock has made Romanticism available in a populist formula more successful than anything achieved by Tarzan or Conan, and rock offers this populist Romanticism not just as a network of artistic conventions

but as a living creed” (38). The utilization of music as the vehicle to deliver the themes of the Romantic period creates an immediacy that is widely accepted and widely utilized. Previously this idea was utilized in chapter one and focused on the active nature of music. Within this chapter I am focusing on the populist aspect in relation to Thrash’s community ethos. The populist interpretation allows for Romantic themes to have new life in Hardcore music. Similarly to how comic book media teaches morality to children, Hardcore music depicts Romantic themes in regard to the nature of the self and community. The juxtaposition of a song that is celebrating the self and a song that is celebrating the communal body of Metalheads creates a depiction of the celebratory creed that Whitman is, in part, responsible for. In the same way that Tarzan and Conan are interchangeable due to their dependency on the hero’s journey, Whitman and Metallica are interchangeable as representatives of Transcendental themes. Both use primitivist language and iconography on a base level, but through that same connection between language and iconography, it brings up the idea of the imagined state of originality and the Imagined Primitive. The Imagined Primitive here is something that is not fully true; it is a narrative that is propped up by tropes and archetypes. Through the engagement of these archetypes on the part of Metallica, it connects them to Whitman’s fascination with the b’hoy archetype. Whitman’s promotion of the Proto-Metal rebel inspires authenticity in his poetry and situates that impulse within the collective consciousness to the level that teenagers still identify and engage with themselves as b’hoy’s or rebels or metalheads to learn what authenticity means for them.

This authenticity, similar to the critiques of Hawthorne, is only a short-sighted goal. It functionally becomes a Yawpic Caricature by the time *And Justice for All* ... comes out in 1989. Metallica’s move toward more radio-friendly sounds creates a sense of commercial success but changes the ethos that they employ. The shift from the celebration of the self, both as a member

of society and a sovereign entity, to the same Apocalyptic Satire that is employed by the punks creates a familiar sense of musical commodity on the self-titled album in 1991, but it moves away from its time as a reinterpretation of transcendentalist sentiment.

The Romantic power that is utilized by Punks and Thrash Metal musicians is not something that is new by any stretch of the imagination. The establishment of the thematic ideas and the balance that is struck between the utopian visions and utopian critique creates a national canon that holds room for both of them. The utopian critique that is established by dark romantics, like Hawthorne, leads to the addition of Utopian Militancy within Folk music. Its power loses momentum and gives rise to the creation of the Apocalyptic Satire of early Punks and the later Hardcore Punks. Thrash's focus on the self and authentic expression is short-lived. Thrash is so focused on the Self that it lacks awareness of the contradictions that it proposes.

The Post-Punk Apocalypse creates a genre that celebrates personal agency and aggression. Thrash is doing this celebration because it is dependent on the archetypes of the individual that Whitman utilized and that the Punks satirized. The Whitman-stylized sentiment is almost a one-to-one reinterpretation of the values that he espoused. The elevation of the rough and rowdy b'hoys archetype paired with the blurring of boundaries between the self and community is renewed by Metallica's debut album *Kill 'em All*. The issue with creating a sense of authenticity on the basis of the Primitive or the authentic is that it stems from a place that cannot know what the origin of human expression is. They are creating music that is an interpretation of an archetype that has been employed since before the nineteenth century. The creative engagement with that archetype is not wholly self-sustaining. The barbaric yawp of Whitman becomes a grotesque Yawpic Caricature in Thrash metal.

The understanding that the Yawp that is employed and celebrated is just that moment of self-assertion that Whitman depicted, and not a lifelong scream, leads to the creation of a new method of engagement with both the music and the literature. The employment of Apocalyptic Satire and Yawpic Caricature creates a blended and Blues-influenced sound in Groove Metal. Groove Metal takes the harshness of Punk and the chest-beating of Thrash to create an internalized sense of binary oppositional forces. Groove Metal as a Blues-influenced vehicle creates a space where artistic rage is the cause and the cure of all tension between the self and community. Pantera and Corrosion of Conformity engage with both sides of the dichotomy between Dark Romantic and Transcendentalist as a way of resolving the paradoxes that are established by the Hardcore Punk genre and the Thrash Metal genre. In resolving those contradictions, they create a perspective that constant self-reflection and social critique create the most intense engagement with art and life.

Chapter 3 - Juxtapositional Paradox: How Melville and Groove Metal Blur Boundaries of The Self and The Collective

Thrash's status as a genre that was redefining the Hardcore sound was short-lived. From 1980 to about 1985, the Big Four of Thrash Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, and Anthrax were releasing albums that shaped the Hardcore genre, but by the late 1980s, their significance was starting to wane. In the aftermath of Metallica's self-titled album, or "The Black Album," as fans have dubbed it, metal overall was a core genre going into the nineties. The declining reputation of Thrash, due to its nature as a grotesque interpretation of Whitmanesque Transcendental self-exploration, starts to give way to a Southern-influenced synthesis in Groove Metal. Because Groove Metal artists were utilizing archetypes of individualism, there started to be a shift toward methods of creation that were more sustaining and life-affirming.

The shift away from the Yawpic Caricature in Thrash metal started to take on an engagement with an internalized sense of uncanniness or grotesqueness represented by Melville's brand of individualism found in Ahab and Groove Metal. An internalized sense of uncanniness or grotesqueness develops from the tensions between the self and community that the Romantic period comments on. Bands like Pantera, Corrosion of Conformity, and other artists within the Groove or Southern Metal subgenre would take on pain in a way that was more direct. Where Punk criticized society to bring about better social conditions, and Thrash celebrated the individual to encourage a sense of pride in the self and community, Groove Metal is reflective on the pain that individuals feel externally and internally to bring about peace through aggressive engagement with the self. The transmutation of positives and negatives results in a method of engagement that is inspired by the Blues. The Southern-Blues-influenced Groove Metal would slow down the pace when compared to Thrash. This influence in Groove

Metal creates a heaviness that directly addresses the blurry boundary between positive and negative emotions.

Melville's use of satire, juxtaposition, and violence creates an interesting representation of humanity. Ahab is a criticism of Transcendental philosophy, but due to his popularity as a character, he can be viewed as an archetype for methods of engaging with the self. Utilizing his framework within different methods of artistic expression allows for the creation of pieces that offer a place where his brand of individualism is safe. In artistic expression, his brand of individualism can be utilized without the possibility of abuse directed toward others. Captain Ahab's presence and the satirical critique of individualistic Emersonian sentiment invite the reader to pay close attention to how Ahab engages with the other characters and the whaling industry. The juxtaposition that is present in humor also takes on serious tones that create a kind of tonal whiplash that furthers the critique of Transcendental sentiment. The fusing of paradoxes through aggression that Ahab utilizes in *Moby-Dick* resolves the contradictions present within himself. In doing so, the crew becomes an extension of his goals and accepts the new method of being that is established through the fusion of those contradictory elements. This method of creation in art gets adopted by Groove Metal artists to critique the contradictions present in the Thrash and Punk genres. Songs like "I'm Broken" by Pantera and "Man or Ash" by Corrosion of Conformity employ the same methods to create a juxtapositional paradox leading to the normalizing of pain through heavy engagement with the dark aspects of the human condition. By understanding how Ahab functions, it reveals how the Blues-influenced Groove Metal handles individualism. Artistically, humanity reconciles the contradictions of the self and community, found in both sides of the Romantic argument, through ambiguity, paradoxical fusing, juxtapositional paradoxes, and the inversion of meaning.

Melville: Framework for Resolving the Paradoxes of Romantic Thought

Similar to Whitman, Melville utilizes his style to blend and respond to the concepts that Emerson and Hawthorne utilize. Where Emerson is explicitly praising the concept of the individual, and Hawthorne is critiquing the nature of reform literature and communities, Melville utilizes his artistic voice to comment without commenting. Melville's use of ambiguity allows for the two sides of the Romantic period argument to manifest in Ahab. F. O. Matthiessen discusses Melville's critical nature toward Emerson's perspective by stating, "He agreed that spirit is substance, but when he contemplated the mystery of the unseen, he began to diverge from the transcendental conclusion that its effect on man was necessarily beneficent" (405). Emerson's promotion of the inner self as the sovereign guiding voice within a person's life is the baseline transcendental position. When approached in a vacuum, it is a position that can be difficult to refute. The desire to create a solid foundation within the self is a noble pursuit, but it can be complex when undertaken in the real world. Melville's characterization creates characters with a high level of complexity that makes it hard to evaluate them as wholly good or evil. In doing so, Melville critiques the Transcendental position. The engagement with the self is useful, but Melville understands that it is useful in so much as it benefits the world around that individual. This begins to establish that the relationship between the self and community is directly tied to each other. If we follow the Transcendental philosophy to its logical conclusion, it becomes Dark Romantic. Dark Romantic themes are critical of human nature and, as a result, lead to the development of the self. Dark Romantic thought's logical goal is Transcendental.

The juxtapositional nature that Melville establishes in Ahab creates a connection to the ways in which people frequently engage with the self and the world around them. Melville's ambiguity of morality in Ahab creates the artistic representation of the complexity of reality.

Reynolds highlights that this juxtaposition and subversive nature were features in Hawthorne's style as well (91). Melville's Ahab utilizes this paradoxical nature most explicitly. His characterization and manifestation of the critical and aspirational qualities of the Romantic literary period illustrate the blurring of the boundaries between self and community. Reynolds' comments about Ahab's function in *Moby-Dick* create a useful position about the practical nature of contradictions when they are present within an individual: "When the opposing paradoxes are fused, they simultaneously turn inward and explode outward, so that both the inner and the outer world take on a paradoxical nature" (289). This feature of Ahab creates the understanding that his nature is deeply reflective and self-involved. The engagement with paradoxes here is the attempt to resolve the contradictions that are present in both the Dark Romantic or Punk social critique and Transcendental philosophy or Thrash Metal. Groove Metal and Ahab both are synthesizing these ideas and utilizing them to resolve contradictions. By resolving them, Melville, or Groove Metal artists create a space where both of these ideas can be used to promote engagement with the community and the self. This reveals that the community and the self are really extensions of each other.

Ahab's paradoxical nature creates a sense of uncanniness, but he utilizes that feeling of contradiction or uncanniness to resolve that tension. Just like how Reynolds states that fusing paradoxes makes the world around them paradoxical, the same could be said of Ahab's nature and how he makes the rest of the world around him uncanny. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in "Phenomenology of Spirit," discusses how this process works. He states, "Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same" (549). Concepts that are often seen as oppositional are not separate because they would not have meaning without the opposing

concept that they mirror. When this fusing takes place, it transmutes that tension into a method to move past contradiction or uncanniness. The tension between the opposing ideas, self and community, uncanniness and a sense of normalcy, archetypes and reality, is the cause and the cure. By engaging with that tension, it reveals to the individual that opposition illustrates the sameness of the concepts.

Ahab's engagement with paradox resolution creates a collective uncanniness among the crew. That is to say, Ahab resolves the contradiction and fuses the opposition within himself. By doing this, he is able to motivate the world around him to do the same. This has been an interpretation of an abuse of power at times, but here it is an engagement with self that establishes community around a shared understanding of pain and will to transmute those ideas into action that resolves contradictions.¹¹ The goal is to overcome pain through a direct engagement with pain. The cause of pain is the cure for the same pain. They are a crew that is supporting the industrial revolution, and they are also a crew that is hunting a particular whale in order to resolve Ahab's desire for vengeance. This engagement with the fear of one man, Ahab, speaks to the fears of the collective. The Whale is uncanny, and in the pursuit of what they believed to be their role in the world, one of them has been made uncanny. This introduces fear to the collective. This is discussed by Freud in "The 'Uncanny.'" Freud states that a way a sense of uncanniness can arise is "when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted are once more revived seem once more to be confirmed" (813). The way to resolve this primitive fear response is through the fusing of the paradox and direct engagement with the fear that has been established. Ahab is fully actualized through the use of his willpower and desire to master the

¹¹ In *The Errant Art of Moby-Dick*, William Spanos discusses how Ahab's relationship with power mirrors American involvement in Vietnam (267-268).

chaos of the natural world, but is traumatized by a fear of primitive violence represented by the loss of his leg.

Ahab's trauma, in turn, manifests the circumstances that traumatize the people under his authority. Ahab's mastery over the tension that is created by this paradox of the hunter being made the hunted is illustrated in the final moments of "The Chase – Third Day." As the ship sinks, there is a moment that highlights the commitment despite what readers could view as a failed mission of revenge: "A red arm and a hammer hovered backwardly uplifted in the open air, in the act of nailing the flag faster and yet faster to the subsiding spar. A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there" (Melville 409-410). Melville's choice to make it clear to the reader that the crew is committed to his mission and that the natural world is taking notice shows the reader the effectiveness of Ahab both as a man and as a symbol for untamed or uncultivated mastery of the world and himself. Melville goes on to state that while the bird is initially taunting this final assertion of Ahab via Tashtego, the bird gets stuck by the flag; "and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it" (Melville 410). Ahab is an all-consuming figure that makes the world just as strange and violent as the world has made him. The bird is a representation of the spiritual world. Tashtego is a representation of the physical world. Ahab unifies the two through his violent charisma and mastery of the spiritual and physical world. This acts as a symbolic representation that to master the physical world or community and the spiritual world or the self, an individual has to

understand that they function as the same thing. To unify a contradiction, an individual has to destroy the meaning of the concepts as separate entities.

The fact that Ahab is so masterful of the world that he is able to pull heaven into hell highlights that his fusing of paradox or opposing ideas is effective to the point that he does not have to be present to fuse those components. Ahab's mastery extends beyond himself, as Reynolds discussed in the nature of fusing paradoxes. William Spanos comments on Ahab's normalization of his pain in *The Errant Art of Moby-Dick*, "Having reified into an instrument of lethal power, Ahab's 'sovereign self' manifests itself as radical contradiction: it can no longer be located, let alone invoked, to modify its instrumentality or to alter the course of action" (137). The use of the sovereign selfhood that Ahab holds is in line with Emerson, but it is also a bastardization of the ideals. Melville creates in Ahab the understanding that the self and the collective are not mutually exclusive concepts. More often, they are concepts that provide the meaning of one to the other through their juxtapositional relationship. Ahab is not utilizing his self-concept to master himself, but taking it past that to master the world and people around him. Ethically engaging with the self implies that the individual is making the world around them a better place by doing so. Melville takes a high level of his time in creating an uncertain sense about Ahab's function. Ishmael gets out of the way of his own narrative so that Ahab can take over with his ill-fated revenge narrative. The blurring of the positive and the negative creates an admiration and critical engagement with the captain. Melville utilizes satire, juxtaposition, and violence to establish this hazy engagement with Ahab. In establishing Ahab as both the protagonist and the antagonist, Melville inverts the meaning of the two.

Reynolds acknowledges the ways in which Melville blends popular humor to create an accessible character: "Melville's humor must be evaluated in light of a hitherto unnoticed type of

popular American humor, what I term nautical humor, which was a kind of fusion of frontier humor and Barnumesque urban humor, featuring wild comic violence and often an emphasis upon bizarre monsters of the deep” (540). This fusion of the violence of the frontier humor and sensationalism creates a gripping character in the form of Ahab. His role as the straight man within a text that has comedic pieces around him promotes his out-of-place position and the humor of maintaining his commitment to serious affect. This method of characterization creates a sense that the positive aspects of Ahab are often directly tied to his negative aspects. It is the same elevation that Whitman employs in his celebration of the b’hoy and the aggrandizement of Emerson’s inner self. The contradictions of these characters or concepts are what make them compelling. Melville’s use of frontier humor and the urban b’hoy is utilized both as a critique of the general positivity that is present in Transcendental sentiment and to illustrate that the critical response to Transcendental themes brings out their complexity. By using methods of creation from both sides of the Romantic binary opposition, Melville creates a critical, but accessible, evaluation of Transcendental fixation on the mastery that Ahab represents.

In “The Pipe,” this style of exaggeration can be seen in the level of gravitas that is attributed to his giving up smoking; prior to this, he is characterized as “For a Khan of the plank, and a king of the sea, and a great lord of Leviathans was Ahab” (Melville 107). The crew’s high level of reverence is then followed by a matter-of-fact tossing away of the pipe. The juxtaposition creates a level of dissonance that creates a humorous situation for the reader. Melville, in this instance, unifies the complexities of the character and creates a sensationalized story about whaling on one hand, and a discussion about the nature of humanity on the other. Ahab is the master of himself and his crew with such efficiency that he can unify heaven and hell, but he is also going to get rid of his pipe because he is not meant to have what he views as

an instrument of peace. “What business have I with this pipe? This thing that is meant for serenity, to send up mild white vapors among mild white hairs, not among torn iron-grey locks like mine. I’ll smoke no more —” (Melville 107). In this short chapter, Melville presents Ahab as a presence within the ship that has a high level of self-assertion. While Ahab is a character who has that level of mastery over the ship, he is also so stressed or angry that he would rather stew in it than engage with any form of self-medication. The medication that is required is implied to be the source of the pain that he feels. Melville’s exaggeration of Ahab continues in the next chapter. In the chapter “Queen Mab,” Stubb, one of the mates, details a dream where Ahab is kicking him with his prosthetic and calling it an honor (Melville 108). In these two chapters, Melville employs this juxtaposition of the worldly greatness that is attributed to Ahab and the surreal absurdity that lies underneath it. Both are depicted as present and true, but the practical and surreal function in a way that further illustrates the extent to which Ahab has mastered himself to the point that he masters those around him regardless of proximity. Ahab is both a fully physical and surreal entity. In *Moby-Dick*, the humorous exaggeration functions differently from Hawthorne’s *Blithedale Romance*; his characters are caricatures of reformers, and Melville utilizes satire to further the juxtaposition of his characters. Melville’s characters are the logical conclusion of Transcendental thought.

This juxtaposition is displayed mainly by the method that Melville uses to characterize Ahab: “They think me mad – Starbuck does; but I’m demoniac, I am madness maddened! That wild madness that’s only calm to comprehend itself! The prophecy was that I should be dismembered; and – Aye! I lost this leg. I now prophecy that I will dismember my dismemberer. Now, then, be the prophet and the fulfiller one” (Melville 136). Here Ahab’s character is presented as a dark, aggressive, grotesque individual. This style of characterization elevates

again what is present in the previous examples, but it utilizes a spiritual aspect that creates a higher level of potency in the discussion of his madness. Similarly to how the Dionysian elements of Thrash were previously discussed, Ahab's madness unifies him with the crew and the world around him in a vulgar and grotesque way. Ahab extends past the physical boundaries of his own body and, in doing so, unifies the spiritual and the physical world through his madness. The characterization lays out the intentions of Ahab clearly and simply. Conversely, when he is characterized with natural aspects of the physical world it creates a much more complex reading of who Ahab is as a character, Melville states in regard to Ahab's scar, "It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearing darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out still greenly alive, but branded" (Melville 103). His physical description here is commenting on the sensationalizing of his physical appearance in that same Barnumesque way, but the gravitas that is attributed to him elevates it to a core aspect of his character. Ahab is strange, but it drives him to correct the contradictions in himself and the world around him.

Reynolds' use of the term Barnumesque is similar to the discussion of the Grotesque that Bakhtin utilizes in *Rabelais and His World*. Where the Barnumesque is a depiction of sensationalized images and comic violence, the Grotesque functions similarly in that it works in tandem with the sublime to depict "true beauty, unattainable by the classic in all its purity" (Bakhtin 45). The exaggeration that is present in Melville's characterization of Ahab creates a beauty in the critique. This is another example of the inversion of meaning. Ahab functions as the human antagonist and symbolic protagonist; he, similarly to the Blues, is the cause and cure to the problem.

Ahab is important in a way that is both naturally present and spiritually pervasive. This paradoxical juxtaposition creates a character that pulls the reader in and confuses them. Ahab is a blending of protagonist and antagonist in a way that forces the reader to reconcile all aspects. In doing so, the internal aspects of the character do explode out and change the larger collective, as Reynolds discussed in *Beneath the American Renaissance* (289). The humor creates an interest in the juxtapositional nature of Ahab. Ahab is a character who reconciles the contradictions that are present in the world around him. Symbolically, Ahab takes the contradictions of the social world and the contradictions within himself and resolves them. That resolution, in turn, makes the world around him change. The uncanniness or the grotesqueness goes from being internally present in him to externally present in the world around him. This changing of the world shatters the meaning of the concepts as they had been previously established. Once the resolution of contradictions takes place, it transmutes the concepts into something new; it changes the meaning of pain. This parallels how Groove Metal functions in its reflection on the contradictions present in Punk and Thrash metal. By unifying them both, Ahab and Groove Metal create methods for authentic engagement through grotesque exaggeration and violent expression of emotion.

The aggression that is used to characterize Ahab takes on a similar function due to the paradoxical fusing of the natural and spiritual power: “Ah, God! What trances of torments does that man endure who is consumed with one unachieved revengeful desire. He sleeps with clenched hands; and wakes with his own bloody nails in his palms” (Melville 161). The addition of violence adds a humanizing component. Ahab’s been made uncanny or grotesque by the loss of his leg, and the internalized uncanniness or grotesqueness creates a point of tension that he has to reconcile. He does this by transmuting the entirety of the boat; they become an extension of

himself by sharing his primitive fear response. By making the space around him share in the uncanniness, he normalizes himself through violence and aggression. Melville utilizes violence as a normalizing agent in the baptism of the barbs, “No, no – no water for that; I want it of the true death-temper. Ahoy there! Tashtego, Queequeg, Daggoo! What say ye, pagans! Will ye give me as much blood as will cover this barb? Holding it high up. A cluster of dark nods replied, Yes” (356). The ritualistic violence creates a sense of dark community in the industrial act of whaling. It can be seen that he is utilizing his authority to do this, but all of these characters engage in a celebratory relationship with violence and industry. On the note of race, Ahab is a white man in a position of authority at a time when there were limited degrees of agency for people of color. From today’s lens, this text is not the kindest depiction of African American, Indigenous, or Southeast Asian people groups.

There is a wealth of criticism on Melville’s depiction of race. Jennifer Schnell in “Racialized Discourses and Cosmopolitan Workforces,” from her book *A Bold and Hardy Race of Men*, she states, “For many American writers who were invested in the idea that whalemens were national heroes, the notion that indigenous people were whaling in the new World before their contact with Europeans was threatening. as a result, very few American writers—before or after Scammon—credited aboriginal peoples with this accomplishment” (184). The inclusion of these characters through today’s lens can be classified as a rough depiction of race, but it is also one of the first to do so in relation to the history of Whaling and whaling narratives. They are caricatures of race, but they are all in positions of power within the ship. This early representation in fiction by today’s standards can be considered negative. That is not to say that all depictions of race within *Moby-Dick* are in this same vein; Fedallah is not given the same level of respect as the other harpooners. Spencer Ticker in “‘Five Dusky Phantoms’: Gothic

Form and Cosmopolitan Shipwreck in Melville's *Moby-Dick*" discusses how the presentation and racial attitudes differ; he states, "As the narrative develops, this biopolitical ascription is directed increasingly towards Malay figures. Moreover, by representing racial otherness in terms of animal hostility, Starbuck anticipates Ishmael's conceit of the 'tiger yellow' Manilla-men" (7). This differs from the general tone of the other harpooners; they still are described with primitivist language, but Fedallah and the other members of his boat are characterized with a higher level of, to use Ticker's words, "animal hostility." They are otherized in comparison to the members of the crew because they are outsiders. While this is present in the text, my focus on Ahab's resolution of contradictions I am reading as an engagement with aggression and self that is mirrored in Groove Metal. That is not to say a reading of race and capitalistic structures is not present in *Moby-Dick*, but it is not the focus of this particular work.

All of these characters have a form of a relationship with aggression; Ahab utilizes violence for his personal betterment. The willful desire to normalize himself is misguided but justified on the part of Ahab from his perspective. This, as well as another point in the Romantic period, has ties to concepts of Primitivism and the baggage that it brings. Melville, throughout the text, utilizes words like pagan, savage, and primitive, and while this does provide a shared language between Romanticism and Hardcore, especially Groove Metal, it is also useful to understand how, if this were only critiqued or celebrated, it could not result in the resolution of paradoxes. Engagement with archetypes is useful in pushing past them to understand the relationship between the self and community. Archetypes are the shared language of an individual's consciousness and the collective consciousness that holds archetypal understanding.

Melville utilizes humor through paradox or contradiction, juxtaposition, and violence to create a character that holds complexity and creates complexity. Ahab takes over the narrative

that Ishmael establishes and changes it from a story about a man who uses sailing as a form of therapy to change his outlook completely. Melville's humorous characterization is a result of the grotesque, exaggerated depiction of Ahab. This makes him palatable as a critique of Transcendental themes; his juxtapositional characterization creates a complexity that highlights the critique of individualism. This critique illustrates to the reader that the self and the community, essentially, only derive meaning from the presence of the other.

Throughout the course of the text, his relationship with violence humanizes him by resolving the tension of his position as a leader who has been brutalized by the prey he hunts. Through violence and aggression, he transposes his will onto everyone around him. In doing so, Ahab is able to resolve this paradox and make the world around him accept the resolution of those contradictory points. This resolution is then able to move past him and take root in the community around him. This component blurs the boundaries between positive and negative engagement with emotion, the self, and community. The method of characterization that Melville employs for Ahab is later adopted into the American canon, and as a figure that grows in popularity over time, he becomes one of the archetypes of individualism that can be used by the collective consciousness. Ahab is a figure that shows up in Metal from time to time; he is the focus of the Mastodon album *Leviathan*. While this album acts as an adaptation of *Moby-Dick*, Groove Metal utilizes its fixation on paradox resolution to engage with the self and community.

In *Triumph of Vulgarly*, Pattinson's explanation of the multigenerational love of the romantic hero is tied to our own desire to master the world around us: "Byron or Raskolnikov became Romantic heroes – profligacy and murder are expressions of an emotional intensity that defies the limits imposed by nature and society. The Romantic hero, burning 'with a hard, gem-like flame,' routinely challenges death with excess, and the rocker follows suit" (123). I would

not say that Ahab is a romantic hero; he is an archetype of masculinity that is a paradoxical representation of the aspirations and the fears. He is a case study of what trauma and leadership can do when they are so closely related. Ahab stands closely related to the ethos of the rocker and the metal musician. Willfully, they demand the world make sense despite their fears and pains, and in doing so, create a space where everyone can get dragged into that method of engagement with community and the self.

Groove Metal: Exercises in Paradox Fusing

Punk's dependency on Folk to levy its social critique creates a dependency on the conventions of that genre. As discussed, it was a socially conscious vehicle for musical expression. Thrash is a celebration of the self and life that is adopted from the Transcendental authors. Groove Metal is the synthesis of the critique and celebration through Blues music. Blues is called the cause and the cure.¹² Blues artists perform Blues as a method of soothing the Blues or the pain that they experience as individuals. Groove Metal, similarly to the Blues, is a reflection on the external or internal pain that the individual experiences. The relationship between the tension that pain causes and the acts that it stirs is paralleled in Ahab as a figure. The solution to the problem that he faces is direct engagement with the problem. Groove Metal is a reflection that unifies the paradox of social critique and celebration that Punk and Thrash perpetuate. This history of how Blues got adopted into Hardcore is at the core of Rock music specifically. Leon Dallin, in *Listeners Guide to Musical Understanding*, points out that rock music's "immediate ancestors were rhythm and Blues music and country and western music, which were themselves products of composite influences" (339). Blues provided a rhythmic

¹² See *Howlin' Wolf Talks About the Blues 1966*; his discussion points out that the Blues is both the feeling that inspires the music and the music itself.

methodology for musical expression early on, but the more musicians invest in that same Blues rhythm creates the rise of a parallel thematic expression in Groove Metal. The dual influence that Blues has on both Rock and Groove Metal highlights Groove's ties to the Blues ethos of resolving emotional paradoxes. Where Punk and Thrash are simplistic approaches to one side of the coin, Groove Metal attempts to illustrate that the binary of critique and celebration creates more problems than it solves. By resolving those tensions, it changes the methods of creation and ways of engaging with humanity. This thematic focus on the reflection on pain as the cause and the cure is an engagement with juxtapositional paradoxes that unify the two. This unification first happens artistically, then it happens individually.

The Blues ethos can be hard to identify the roots of. Due in part to the blending of African American musical influences that predate traditional recording. While this is true, the influence that Blues has had is well-documented and often connected to Blues musician Robert Johnson. In *ReMastered: Devil at the Crossroads*, the film discusses Blues music and its origins alongside Robert Johnson, the king of the Delta Blues. The origins of Blues as a field music are tied to the Southern sharecropper culture that existed at the time, musician Taj Mahal states, "But, on the weekend, the musicians came out. It served as a balm for people who were in bondage. And it gave you a way to get out" (Oakes 8:58). Blues is a form of entertainment for a people that are oppressed; it is escapism and an assertion of individual agency when options for African Americans were extremely limited. Music, Mahal states, has the potential to liberate, "You play that music, you could be outside yourself. You know, you could take everybody else out. You know, outside of their selves" (Oakes 9:01). Amiri Baraka in *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, furthers this by discussing how Blues is not about musical training; the Blues is about understanding that the world would sell an individual short and not understand

that the creation of art was the natural inclination of the human experience (82). The Blues liberates one from limitations both internal and external. Blues is interested in this as a form of authentic healing through music. Ahab's engagement with fusing oppositional ideas is concerned more with personal mastery. Both of these methods of engagement with the self are seeking similar goals. Groove Metal, because of its relationship with Blues, synthesizes both to have a similar effect; Pattinson states, "Our souls no longer rebel at a *Sorrow* which we ourselves have imposed upon ourselves, in furtherance of our own purposes – with a view – if even with a futile view – to the extension of our own *Joy*" (91). The Blues' influences on Rock and Groove Metal highlights that the tools to reach a desired state lie in the pain that is felt. This pain is felt only as an extension of the possible joy that can be felt as well. The two are not mutually exclusive, and Groove Metal seeks to play with that dichotomy. Groove Metal is the musical representation of Ahab's characterization. It has an ability to fuse contradictions and create new meaning through the resolution of contradictions. While Ahab stands as an influential figure who represents a new brand of individualism in literature, Robert Johnson is the physical representation of the cause of pain being the cure for pain. The two are distinct, but concerned with similar ideas.

At the time of Robert Johnson, Blues music as well picks up the element of gothic spiritual iconography. The documentary expands on this in discussing the history of the Church's labeling the Blues as a form of the devil's music and Johnson's own practice style. The Southern Baptist preachers called out the low attendance in the church because of the Juke clubs at the time creating a space for communal entertainment and healing from generational trauma through the devil's music or Blues music (Oakes 13:15). At this time the power of the church cast a label of sin on music that would go on to influence Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, the direct influences for British Heavy Metal that would jump an ocean and lead to Thrash Metal and the

clearly bluesy Groove Metal. Robert Walser, in *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, discusses how both Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath operate as Blues-influenced bands that lean on occult imagery and supernatural ideas to add a grotesque exaggeration of Blues themes (36). Because of this influence, all of these bands have had some sort of label of hard partying or devilishness attached to them at some point. This all originates with Robert Johnson and his contemporaries creating music that is the cause and the cure for pain. These artists mirror the ideas of the b'hoy archetype that Ahab represents. These distinct cultural modes of expression engage with similar ideas. Blues, and the genres that follow, operate within the cause and cure ethos by addressing the world around them. Groove Metal reflects on the internal world's tension with the external world and hopes to provide a method for the individual to resolve paradoxes. In doing so, these individuals resolve the contradictions present around them.

Groove metal synthesizes the ethos of Blues music and the literature that it is tied to. The cause of pain and cure for pain are the same thing, and that is the spirit of the Blues. This spirit slows down Thrash Metal's speed and ups the heaviness of the musical content that drives the related messages of Groove Metal and Blues. This cause and the cure ethos is achieved through a similar method that Amiri Baraka discusses in *Blues People*, "Classic blues was much more an instrumental style; though the Classic blues singers did not lose touch with the vocal tradition, they did more intricate styles of the jazz bands to good effect" (90). The musical style is indebted to this ethos that is created in the Southern Blues sphere. Blues is an instrument-focused vocal tradition, and the complexity that it can evolve into creates the intricate and complex web of influence that Groove Metal rises out of. Groove Metal bands are synonymous with Southern Metal, and similarly to the formation of the early Rock sound, it is tied to that same Blues ethos.

Rex Brown, Pantera's bass player, expands on this connection in several interviews. In an interview for Scott's Bass Lessons, he discussed that Vinnie Paul, Pantera Drummer, and he grew up playing in the high school Jazz band (Devine 17:27). Pantera, as they developed, adopted a Thrash method of musicality upon the release of *Ride the Lightning* by Metallica in 1984. Rex Brown states in the same interview, "So about '84, about the time *Ride the Lightning* came out, is when it all changed. You know, this heavy riffing, you know, that's when it all changed. Because we were so young, we kept that natural progression. You got a band that's tight. We can all play together really good, you know" (Devine 16:44). *Ride the Lightning* followed *Kill 'em All*, Metallica's first album, and was an album that built on the same Thrash ethos that had been established in part by the members of Metallica. The blending of Southern Blues and California Thrash Metal pushes the members of Pantera to develop a heavier genre that is found in Southern Groove Metal. The development of Pantera mirrors the origins of early Rock music; this music developed in the South because of its proximity to Gospel, Blues, Jazz, and Country music. Robert Pattinson discusses the development of rock and how it is tied to Romantic-period sentiment.

Pattinson discusses the connection between 19th-century American literature and the development of early rock in *Triumph of Vulgarly*. The South, according to Pattinson, is "an area that has a history of translating Romantic ideas into action" (51). That condition is present in the creation of Blues music and other genres that critique or celebrate life in the South. Romantic period themes are translated from intellectual ideas to music, which has a higher level of immediacy and the ability to disseminate those ideas to the real working figures that Whitman elevated in his poetry. The South has the ability to translate Romantic-period ideology because it contains the physical representations of the cultural concepts that the Romantics discussed.

Robert Johnson and other Blues musicians parallel the concepts of the b'hoy archetype. It holds a Southern Gothic culture that is actively engaged with and depicted in music as discussed in *ReMastered: Devil at the Crossroads*, "I believe Robert Johnson's association with hoodoo and using the references in his lyrics empowered him. It was, 'Yeah, if you mess with me, something bad's gonna happen to you because it's not just me, it's the power behind me'" (Oakes 25:30). This active engagement with culture and art creates music that elevates both the status of the culture that it is drawing on and the individuals that are utilizing it to symbolically attain mythic authenticity and practical agency. The use of hoodoo references from the out-group perspective builds a mystic quality to music that is commenting on the practical conditions that African Americans existed in at that time. The South also shares the ideas of primitivism that Thrash benefits from generations later; the adoption of Blues style leads to the interpretations of it that are found in Rock music and the genres that would follow.¹³ Pattinson feels that this takes place because it is a "locale remote from the intellectual mainstream of Western culture and therefore safe from the censorious scrutiny of an educated elite fussing about the popularization of Romantic ideas" (51). The South acts as a location where the physical representations of Romantic ideas intermingle and create art that would go on to inform Rock. Blues, after the introduction of Rock, still influences and further solidifies the roots that Hardcore music has in Blues and Romantic period sentiment. Stylistically, the Blues rhythm and ethos get reintroduced to Hardcore during the Groove Metal period to create a heavier sound musically and an increased potency of the themes that it utilizes. Ahab, as a character, parallels this paradoxical internalized sense of the other and proud individuality that the Blues typifies.

¹³ See *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* by Robert Walsner pg. 33. He discusses how the history of music often overlooks the early influences of marginalized communities.

Groove Metal is characterized by a slow swinging groove that shows off the Blues influence of these bands. A good majority of the bands that come to mind are also bands based out of the South, furthering the connection between their musical style and the Southern Blues music that helped found Rock as a genre. The song “I’m Broken” by Pantera starts with a swinging down-tuned guitar coupled with a bassline that rocks the song through its paces. The core riff starts the song off at 0:02. The simplistic structure of the main guitar riff rests on a mirrored bass line that adds the foundation to the piece. Where Thrash was focused on speed in the music, Groove metal gives the listener a solid, heavy space to feel the piece directly. That foundation in the music is exemplified by the breakdown in the song that takes place at 1:41, which asks the listener to feel as it provides some breathing room between lyrical content. Thematically, this piece is a discussion of pain and the futility of life. The juxtaposition of the futility of the human condition and the powerful groove that they occupy creates a chest-beating pride in acknowledging the contradictions of living. With the musical content of the song being so heavy throughout the piece, the solo starting at 2:30 creates a musical juxtaposition. The bass under it is adding that heaviness and rhythm to the piece while guitarist “Dimebag” Darrel Abbot plays a whining slide followed by Thrash-influenced speed. Here, there is a blending of conventions that pair the celebratory impulses of Thrash, the rhythmic sensibilities of the Blues, and the lyrical or thematic content of Punk. In this synthesis of musical and thematic content, the listener is presented with a unification of opposing ideas.

The fusion that is taking place in Groove Metal, similarly to Ahab’s fusing of paradoxes, creates a musical piece that allows for a different method of expression and engagement to take place. Groove metal is critique and celebration. The chorus, “I’m Broken. Inherit my life. I’m broken,” is barked by Phil Anselmo with a frantic, growling pain (Pantera 1:06 – 1:10). The

performance adds a texture that is not an admission of defeat but a point of snarling pride. Similar to Ahab, he is utilizing a juxtaposition of the negative and positive aspects of life and emotion by admitting to himself that his situation has created a sense of uncanniness or grotesqueness, but it is his to do with what he will. When the chorus returns, there is a subtle difference in stating “You’re Broken. Inherit your life. You’re Broken” (Pantera 1:49 – 1:57). This coupled with a trudging musical breakdown, highlights the feeling of being normalized to pain and the normalcy of experiencing that echoes back to Ahab’s creation of a collection of broken whalers. The satirical absurdity then is why do people know that life and pain are inseparable, and choose to hide that aspect from their conscious thoughts? If this is a widespread collective condition, it is understandable and justifiable to create a community around the mutual identification of individual pain.

The absurdity surrounding pain is further highlighted by the first verse by stating, “I wonder if we’ll smile in our coffins while loved ones mourn the day. The absence of our faces living, laughing eyes awake, is this too much for them to take?” (Pantera 0:27 – 0:38). The paradoxical relationship that is being illustrated in this line creates a sense of joy and loss that blurs the boundaries between how people view the two. Pantera is creating a narrative where the narrator is in the grave, conscious to an extent, and laughing at the grief of their family. In the juxtaposition, it unsettles the meaning of both of the concepts to the point that life is the toxic positive and death is a welcomed negative. Simon Critchley discusses how music functions in *Mysticism*. He states, “Perhaps the closest we get to feeling and communicating with an animated universe is in the experience of music” (11). This animated universe that he is discussing is the collective consciousness that allows for the Romantic methodology to show up in different places. The broad collective has access to these ideas through cultural resonance. This

connection to the collective consciousness parallels how Ahab functions in *Moby-Dick*. Through the unification of contradictory concepts, Ahab is able to connect with the broader world around him and resolve contradictions present there.

The Punks picked up on the Dark Romantic critique, Thrash picked up on the celebration of the individual, and the resulting tension creates a contradictory impulse. The juxtaposition between the two sects of Romantic sentiment is at the heart of the argument against individualism, but individualism has to be engaged with to build a collective perspective on the same idea. To resolve the contradiction between the two creates a pantheistic engagement with both Dark Romantic sentiment and Transcendentalism. Following both of their arguments to the logical conclusion results in the manifestation of the other side of the argument. The cyclic engagement with critique and celebration leads to the creation of the independent self and the critical collective. The tension between the two are the critique one holds against the other.

This cyclic engagement between critique and celebration is further commented on by “Man or Ash” by Corrosion of Conformity. “Man or Ash” takes the conversation away from the internalized uncanniness or grotesqueness that Pantera is more closely engaged with and turns the focus on to how the broader collective deals with the concepts. The collective uncanniness that is being discussed is similar to the resulting strangeness that Ahab manifests after he has learned to fuse contradictory elements within himself. This fusion, as represented by Pantera, coupled with the acknowledgement of violence as a method of humanizing or normalizing the uncanny nature of paradoxical fusion, creates a piece that comments on the nature of community. The song opens with a clear Southern Metal influence that Pantera less explicitly exhibits, the sliding into chords and bending of notes furthers the hypnotic groove of the song’s introductory riff (Corrosion of Conformity 0:80). The song goes on to exhibit that same trudge as it leads into

the opening verse the second line, “Life is a sin when the shepherds are breeding. In the quiet place force the mind to erase. So, the people can pray to the distant drummer” (0:39 – 1:04). The gritty melody of Pepper Keenan’s vocals highlights the paradoxical nature of human existence by calling out how collectively people engage in a system that perpetuates the status quo. Pepper achieves this through the adoption of a Blues-influenced vocal inflection. This creates a breath to the music that the rhythm section surrounds. Musically, the structure of the song represents the pain of existence. In contrast, the vocal component represents the endurance of humanity. While pain is present externally and internally, the human desire to rage against it creates the impulse to express experience. There is no desire to elevate as long as humanity continues to procreate and distract itself with social features that promote docility. Art is the direct impulse against that, whether it be literature, Blues, Folk, Punk, Thrash, or Groove Metal. The impulse to express under conditions that discourage it is paradoxical in nature, but through creation, humanity resolves those contradictions.

The chorus, sung by James Hetfield of Metallica, critiques society further by growling in repetition, “These are primitive times,” before going on to sing with Pepper Keenan, “No care no less divine. Surpass be it man or ash” (1:13 – 1:36). This example of the shared language between the Romantic period and the Hardcore music space operates again in a way where the meaning of these words is inverted. Similarly to how Pantera has inverted views on the positive or negative connotations of life and death, Corrosion of Conformity invert the connotations of humanity and the lack of humanity. Even the boundaries within the song structurally begin to blur between verse and chorus as the final word leads directly into the first word of the next section. Corrosion of Conformity is commenting on the widespread closed loop that humanity inhabits. This loop is represented to the extent that humanity might as well be living ash. Much

like how these artists are utilizing the same methods that have been used since the Romantic period, the problems that both are commenting on continue to persist. The use of the word primitive is not a request for the traditional notion of progress but asks humanity to acknowledge that they are not as conscious of the implications that their critiques or celebrations imply. The notion of progress is a fantasy based on the imagined primitive. The use of the primitive here is stating that nothing has changed, and humanity is still the same animal. The internal brokenness that Pantera is highlighting is what Corrosion of Conformity is asking people to collectively acknowledge. Through violent and spiritual imagery, Corrosion of Conformity normalizes what they feel humanity hides from the collective consciousness.

Each iteration of Romantic sentiment and its Hardcore mirror point is invested in understanding the world and the human condition. Punk's focus on social critique and reform is the same driving force as that of the Dark Romantic authors; they want to bring about a world that functions to the best of its ability. The Transcendentalists are concerned with the human element within that, and Thrash does the same through its celebratory impulse. Groove Metal, borrowing from both, synthesizes the ideas to connect to Melville's views on the use of moral ambiguity. Both of them use it as a method of resolving the tension between contradictory viewpoints. The synthesis of the previous waves that Melville and Groove Metal create holds within it a position that can only rise out of the surrounding argument. Emerson, Hawthorne, Whitman, Blues, Folk, Punk and Thrash had to push and pull on the views and themes until the synthesis that takes place in *Moby-Dick* and Groove Metal. These bones are the starting points for all Hardcore music's departures. Understanding their roots in the Romantic period allows for the understanding of how these themes evolved into the consciousness that the collective operates within. Broadly speaking, Rock and the Hardcore subgenre are largely underground

forms of artistic expression, but understanding the popularity and the subsequent fading popularity allows for an understanding of the ways in which Romanticism informs artistic expression both at the highest levels of commercial success and the lowest levels of local scene popularity.

Ahab represents a form of archetypal individualism that unifies and fuses contradictions. By understanding the contradictions within the character, we develop an understanding that those ideas provide meaning to the other. There is no hunter without the hunted; there is no self without community. The desire of one side of the relationship is in contrast to the other, but the meaning of each concept is only present because of the relationship it has to the other. Ahab utilizes this tension to fuse oppositional concepts. This fusion happens through aggressive engagement and understanding that when a person inverts meanings, they are provided the cure to the cause of the pain that they experience. This action transmutes pain into action and creates something that people can identify with and build a community around. This community is represented by the crew symbolically and practically by the Hardcore subculture.

The synthesis that is taking place, both in Melville and in Groove Metal, is where the Hardcore subgenre and subculture are currently. Groove Metal as a subgenre peaked in popularity in the Nineties and early 2000's before giving way to other commercially successful genres of music. The hardcore space is still heavily influenced by the Groove metal subgenre and has stratified into subgenres like Stoner Metal, Southern Metal, Doom Metal. All of these subgenres exhibit the same core values of the original Groove Metal. The subgenres are fixated on the use of exaggeration, paradoxes, and violence. These genres are still tied to the ideas that are found in Romantic-period themes. Some of the genres will favor one of those three components over another; for example, Doom metal focuses more on exaggerated violence,

while Stoner focuses more on exaggerated spiritualism. Southern Metal bands grab a contradictory “cause and cure” ethos found in Blues and discuss regional themes. All of this to say, the ethos that creates the current state of Hardcore is rooted in the genres that came before, and all of those subgenres are rooted in the vulgar display of self and the satirical critique of community that the American Romantics established.

Conclusion

In comparing Hardcore music genres and American Romantic authors, the understanding that the two function similarly crystallizes. Both of these mediums are concerned with the same ideas and attempt to find answers regarding humanity and community. By discussing the responsibilities of the self and the community, we understand that the binary that is set up by these authors is not necessarily the reality. Both of these concepts are given meaning by the other. While Hardcore music reveres the individual, it is a generator for the creation of communities. These communities set up conventions and methods of being that then reinforce the evolution of expression and community in a cycle of creation and recreation. Punk's limitations led to the creation of Thrash, and Thrash's limitations led to the creation of Groove Metal. Punk's method of creation today is now best suited for independent comic book media; Thrash is functionally stagnant, and Groove Metal is taking the previous iterations and democratically letting them grow into other subgenres. Groove has led to Southern Metal, Doom Metal, and Stoner Metal. Metal, like Hardcore music overall, removes barriers that the academic conversation can reinforce. The search for more authentic methods of expression is embedded in American culture due to the thematic ideas of the works of Hawthorne, Whitman, and Melville; Hardcore music provides a vehicle for these themes to be engaged with and redefined.

The significance of this focus area is inherent in the goals of the Romantic period. Their discussion on the nature of the individual and the community leaves people with tools to discover what that means for themselves. The elevation of the natural world to the sublime is the allowance of the beauty in all things. There is beauty in pain because it derives meaning from the juxtaposition of the two. The celebration of life that is drafted in those works cannot remain only

in those works because to do so would be to stop that goal from being achieved through the populist nature of music.

Metal music as a genre of expression is understudied and underappreciated for the literary value that it has. The creators of this space understand this and promote it; Rick Rubin, with Stauss in his book *The Creative Act*, states, “Within the richness of nature, the variations are easily noticeable. Some are shouts, others whispers. Even if an element seems static, whether a work of art in a museum or an everyday object in a kitchen, when we look at it deeply, we can see a newness” (55). When the producer of Metallica, Slipknot, Glenn Danzig, and System of a Down believes that this is a truth about the world and the act of creating, the connection between modern music and the Romantic period is solidified. Creation is a romantic act; Metal creators, through an appreciation of authenticity, are engaging with it in a way that is a conversation with the Romantic period authors.

The study of Hardcore music is the study of how the average individual who does not have a seat at the academic table understands Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville. Metal music’s historical illegitimacy limits the methods by which Romanticism can be studied. Allowing it a seat at the academic table would remove the stigma that this method of expression lacks the complexity of literature; it is founded on and dependent on it. While this work has fixated on the ways in which the themes of the Romantic period are carried over, Hardcore music fills in the gaps. When the concerns regarding the practicality of social reform are presented, Punk calls for exaggeration. When Punk neglects individualism, Thrash celebrates it until there is a community built around that idea. When the contradictions between the two veins of thought are noticed, Groove resolves them by seeing the problem as the solution. The binaries that are present in both the Romantic period and Hardcore music are useful for classification, but limit the ability to

bring about methods for individuals and communities to function. By blurring the boundaries between the two, we learn that one cannot exist without the other. Hardcore music is dependent on the literature; both sides of the Romantic period tensions are dependent on each other. The individual is dependent on the community, and the community is dependent on the individual.

With this understanding in mind, looking into various communities would further the understanding of how they function. The limitations of this project are in part due to the level of diversity of thought within the Hardcore space. The multiple subgenres create a wealth of space for further research. Drawing comparisons between Emily Dickinson and Die Spitz or the earlier Riot Grrrl Punk movement would add an interesting level of nuance to a community that often overrepresents masculine perspectives. By looking at how cultural knowledge shapes art through Indigenous Metal bands like the Dead Pioneers, the history of Hardcore accepts influences that are present and often overshadowed. These bands often question the primitivist impulse of the broader Hardcore genre. Looking at the connection between Gothic literature, Horror Films, and bands that lean into the aesthetic of those mediums primarily would create an interesting discussion of the grotesque. Rob Zombie, for example, would take the grotesque nature of Hardcore and essentially double down to create a spectacle of rage, religious iconography, and absurdity. Hardcore music can be a vehicle for thematic questions, discussions of identity or culture, and it can be art for art's sake.

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