

Crisis? What Crisis?: Anglophone Musicmaking in Montreal

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ABSTRACT

The relationship of musicmaking to the city is a complicated one as it often takes very specific and complex spatial and social forms. The example of Montreal can be used to illustrate some of the ways in which these forms manifest themselves. By considering the way in which two particular cultural spaces, namely scene and bohemia, emerge in relation to musical activity, this project analyzes the nature of musicmaking and its role in shaping a unique experience of the city. It frames a case study of Montreal musicmaking to explore the ways in which scenes and bohemias are connected to city life. It also considers the way in which a particular image of the city manifests itself through musicmaking. The collective representation of Montreal as a bohemia by anglophone musicmakers works with and through a number of social divisions and cultural distinctions. It is argued that the nature of place-images and mythology in musicmaking is such that they have a profound effect on the sociomusical experience of the city. Montreal is privileged by many anglophone musicmakers as an ideal city in which to be culturally active, as the city's weak economic state is perceived to foster the conditions best suited to a flourishing bohemia.

This project examines the relationship of musicmakers to Montreal, using a variety of research methods and theories. Cognitive mapping, diaristic accounts and interviews are utilized to better apprehend how a chosen image of Montreal affects musical practice. The socioeconomic history of Montreal in the latter half of the twentieth century is used to frame an analysis of the emergence of an independent music scene in the city. By exploring a number of relevant factors, this project documents the ways in which musicmaking is structured in relation to the economic, political and social dimensions of Montreal.

RÉSUMÉ

La relation entre la création musicale et la ville reste compliquée alors qu'elle prend souvent des formes spatiales et sociales à la fois spécifiques et complexes. L'exemple de Montréal illustre bien comment ces formes peuvent se manifester. En observant la façon particulière que deux espaces culturels, notamment « scene » et « bohemia », émergent par rapport à l'activité musicale, ce projet analyse la nature de la création musicale et son rôle porteur dans une expérience unique de la ville.

Le cas spécifique de la création musicale Montréalaise est utilisé pour explorer comment « scene » et « bohemia » sont reliées à la vie de la ville. Ce projet considère également comment une image particulière de la ville se manifeste dans la création musicale. La représentation collective de Montréal en tant que « bohemia » par les créateurs musicaux anglophones est basée sur de nombreuses divisions sociales et distinctions culturelles.

Il est soutenu que la nature des « place-images » et de la mythologie dans la création musicale est telle qu'elle a un impact profond sur l'expérience socio-musicale de la ville. Montréal est perçue par de nombreux créateurs musicaux anglophones comme étant une ville idéale pour la création artistique : la faiblesse économique de la ville est vue comme un environnement idéal pour encourager l'épanouissement de la « bohemia ».

Utilisant diverses méthodes de recherche, ce projet examine la relation entre Montréal et ses créateurs musicaux. « Cognitive mapping », récits journaliers et entrevues sont utilisés pour mieux comprendre l'impact qu'une image particulière de Montréal peut avoir sur la pratique musicale. L'histoire socio-économique de Montréal à travers la dernière moitié du XX^{ème} siècle sert à encadrer l'analyse de l'émergence d'une scène musicale indépendante dans la ville. En explorant un nombre de facteurs pertinents, ce projet documente comment la création musicale est structurée par rapport aux dimensions économiques, politiques et sociales de Montréal.

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INTRODUCTION

Scene from the Window

The window on the street is not a mental place from which the interior gaze would be following abstract perspectives. A practical site, private and concrete, the window offers views that are more than spectacles. Perspectives which are mentally prolonged so that the implication of this spectacle carries its explanation. Familiarity preserves it as it disappears and is reborn, with the everyday life of inside and out. Opacity and horizons, obstacles and perspectives are implicated, for they become complicated, imbricate themselves to the point of allowing the Unknown, the giant city, to be perceived or guessed at. With its diverse spaces affected by diverse temporalities—rhythms.

(Henri Lefebvre)¹

Let me begin first by offering a perspective, literally a point of view which brings into focus a particular vision of the city of Montreal. For the last six years I've lived on St. Laurent, the "Main," just north of Pine Ave. For those that don't know it, this particular intersection stands as a symbol of the social and economic life in Montreal for a number of reasons. During the time that I've been here, the shape of the neighbourhood has changed gradually but dramatically. I've witnessed these changes through my office window, from which I can gaze down onto St. Laurent. From here, I've watched the steady rotation of shops, with old stores replaced by new restaurants, discount computer shops, book stores, and clothing shops. I live in an area now nicknamed "Little Asia," an appellation which refers to the many Asian fast food joints which have appeared on the Main in recent years. Some people lament the disappearance of the mom and pop shops, delis, kitchenware stores, and bakeries. Others see a street reinvigorated by new waves of immigrant entrepreneurs which have moved in to stake their claim to the mythical promise the Main has consistently offered newcomers to the city. Whether negative or

positive, both of these assertions reiterate the rich history inscribed into the both the built and imaginary landscape of St. Laurent.

There is more evidence of the changes begin wrought on the Main. Although I can't see them from my window, the three buildings just south of me speak to the street's history and its myths as well. Abandoned as apartments, their first floors, all commercial spaces, eked out an existence that seemed astoundingly resilient given the apparent lack of interest in their wares. The apartment directly adjacent to mine was, when I moved in, a punk squat, its first floor occupied by an antique dealer. Three years ago, it was renovated, the punks had to find a new home and the first floor has since become a successful jewelry shop. Two doors down was the Pecker Brothers' kitchenware store, a modest yet cluttered shop filled from floor to ceiling with poppy seed grinders, teakettles, mops, espresso makers, and other sundry domestic items, many of which catered to the European shop owners who used to be regular customers. When Louis Pecker, the last surviving brother and a man who would gladly regale you with stories of life on the Main during the thirties, retired in 2001, rumours of renovation and condo conversion circulated rapidly among the neighbours (which proved to be true). Three doors down, above Mr. Falafel and its iconic neon, the two-storey apartment abandoned for nearly twenty years was recently gutted by fire, the result of the ad hoc wiring used to electrify a marijuana "grow room" (run by yet more squatters). While this last example is an exception, the other changes are often read as signs, portents some would say, of things to come for the Main, as Montreal's recent economic recovery has meant that the northern push of new capital, which always seemed to stall at Pine, may have finally gained a foothold north of the intersection.

But these narratives of rejuvenation, renovation and gentrification are hardly stories indigenous just to Montreal; any city will tell these tales. What is perhaps more significant about this particular intersection, its social and semiotic value, is that it might also be figured as a juncture which tells a unique tale about Montreal, a point at which numerous trajectories, narratives, biographies and vectors meet to produce an area rich with social, temporal and spatial significance for the “giant city,” as Lefebvre suggests. It instantiates and concretizes a number of aspects of social, political, economic and imaginative dimensions of life in Montreal. Martin Allor has described St. Laurent as a chronotope, a text through which can be read ““the ratio and nature of the temporal and spatial categories represented”” (Allor, citing Bakhtin, 1997: 46). He suggests “the Main can be read as both a central production of the past and present politics *l’identitaire* of Montreal and as a way of specifying questions of the politics of place...” (ibid). More pointedly, he claims that

The places and practices of cultural activity on the Main can function as an exemplar of the relations between the private and the public, the local and the global. Indeed, Augé’s oxymoron of intimate alterity should ideally sit alongside Raymond Williams’ own oxymoron of mobile privatization as a naming of the structure of feeling of leisure-cultural activity.

(Allor, 1997: 51)

The street’s structure of feeling is evident at the intersection of Pine and St. Laurent, where with a studied gaze one can discern in the hustle and bustle the competing and complementary rhythms which characterize the social life and underpin the broader urban ambience of Montreal. The built environment and the commercial life reveal the economic cycles of Montreal, as do the periodic movements of immigrants who have left countless traces along the Main. Alongside the Arab fruit stand, the Hungarian bakery,

the Spanish grocer, the hammock store, the Slovenian deli, the dance clubs, the cafés, the piercing salon, the Thai take-away, and the noodle shops, you find here examples of what Lefebvre notes are cyclical and linear rhythms of street life. The cyclical is “social organization manifesting itself,” and the linear is “routine, thus the perpetual, made up of chance and encounters” (Lefebvre, 1996: 222). St. Laurent provides a healthy dose of both. The minor narratives of everyday life bump up against the metanarratives of the many histories found on St. Laurent, a productive tension which allows the Main to serve as an index of the city’s robust conviviality, as well as a barometer of its economic state. One can find on the Main the complex layering of the rhythms that underscore the varied tenor of Montreal life.

By way of introducing a broader discussion of the culture of city life, I want to change tack slightly by borrowing the titular conceit from Brian Massumi’s recent Parables for the Virtual (2002). In it, he traces out the nature of affect and mobility, as it is realized or expressed in contemporary culture. It’s possible to frame many of the stories found on the Main as parables which resonate with a similar affective charge, edifying tales that tell us about the resilience of the immigrant entrepreneur, the story of French and English relations, or the economic ups and downs of Montreal. The Main also tells us about the vibrant cultural life of Montreal, for while the street serves as the major immigrant corridor in Montreal, it also houses a number of cultural institutions, performance spaces and acts as one of the city’s primary channels for cultural promotion, with the street’s mailboxes, lampposts, abandoned store fronts and sundry blank spaces thickly layered with handbills and posters advertising a range of cultural events (Allor, 1997; Bourassa and Larrue, 1993). Ads for musical events form the bulk of this paper

trail and to the varied tales of Montreal life can be added, without taking Lefebvre's notion of rhythms too literally, a consideration of stories associated with musicmaking in the city.

I want to offer here the example of a small Montreal record label, derivative records (the name is deliberately in lowercase letters, a sign perhaps of its self-described modest approach to musicmaking), whose activity I'm reading as a kind of parable that prompted me to explore the complicated relationship of musicmaking to the city. Like most parables, there is something instructive to be found here: it tells the story of a record label's deep imbrication in the city and how a cultural and social activity like musicmaking can be founded upon a preferred, in fact standardized, reading of Montreal. derivative's operation says a great deal about how the city is understood in the everyday life of musicmakers as well as how the city's "imaginative structure" (Blum, 2003) supports musicmaking. derivative's story is woven together through a number of Montreal-based networks, industries and institutions. Hardly the stuff of romance, and a story which might seem even less compelling because there is no discernible heroic narrative either (in fact, it's more of an anti-heroic narrative). The attitude that derivative took towards the city, however, offers insight into another tale which is just as rich and revealing in terms of Montreal's cultural life. derivative's activity exemplifies a relationship to Montreal which points to a number of provocative issues surrounding the collective representation of Montreal and provides a metaphorical window through which we can begin to discern how the city comes to matter in both a material and symbolic sense.

The Story of a Little Fish in a Little Pond

Making music in Montreal means understanding that you're a little fish in a little pond. In Toronto, it means thinking that you're a littler fish in a bigger pond.

(Patti, derivative records)

derivative records was a small independent record label that operated in Montreal between 1992-1998. The two original founders, Patti and Kevin, established the label as a cassette/7-inch-only label. When distribution increased to meet demand in the U.S. and Europe, they brought in Gen and Pat, and expanded their format to include compact discs. derivative remained active until 1998, when, with the collapse of the one-stop distributor Cargo Canada (discussed below), the label quietly shut down. derivative and its brand of music emerged out of a typical independent music sensibility: boredom, bedrooms, vanity and a sense of urgency that something must be done to offer a healthy antidote to what was seen as an anemic Montreal scene. Even as their reputation in Montreal grew, the label's greatest sales were increasingly outside of the city and outside of Canada, a modest sign of success that established derivative's reputation among North American and European independent music fans. Eventually, they formed distribution and licensing deals with a number of labels in the U.S. and the U.K.

derivative's members brought to the label a wider aesthetic perspective combined with personal and professional histories whereby label activity remained relatively unaffected by the limited musical resources found in Montreal. The solution derivative cobbled together out of Montreal's musical milieu relied, in part, on the label owners' musical biographies and reputations inside and outside of the city. The status of derivative in Montreal's scene, their value as independent cultural producers, as well as the various positions the members held in the scene's infrastructure, allowed multiple

forms of access to new music and the circuits through which it could be heard and disseminated. Their place in Montreal-based institutional and industrial networks fostered an ideal organizational frame of mind, supported also by their diverse musical experiences and workplace connections, all of which served to cross-subsidize derivative's musicmaking. Of these intertwining networks, two significant points of contact in the music scene's infrastructure made much of derivative's label operation possible: CBC Radio and the one-stop distributor, Cargo Canada.

The first point of contact with both the Montreal scene and the broader music community centered on Kevin, Gen and Patti's involvement with the late-night CBC FM (Radio 2) program *Brave New Waves*. *Brave New Waves*, established in 1984, has played a crucial role in shaping the independent music community in Canada.² Broadcast after midnight Sunday through Thursday from Montreal, *Brave New Waves* has been a showcase for new independent, experimental and avant-garde music, profiling bands, airing lengthy interviews with musicians, and providing space for cultural commentary. It remains the longest-running show on Radio 2 with a target demographic aged 18-35, an anomaly in a radio schedule offering programming which is decidedly high-brow and classical/jazz based, interspersed with "adult" news and current affairs. However, it is a show notable for the programmer's refined taste as borne out by the esoteric eclecticism of its programming. The programmers receive new music daily, in the form of promotional CDs and vinyl sent in from other independent labels, linking them to an extensive web of contacts that gave them access to new material that they might then choose to carry in their catalogue.

The second point of contact is Cargo Canada, where some members of derivative also worked. Since the mid-eighties, Montreal had been the base for the one-stop distributor, during which time Cargo served as the distribution wing for a number of international labels. It also demonstrated a commitment to local independent labels by funding them, typically by fronting the capital that would allow labels to support numerous music projects simultaneously. Cargo also employed a number of anglophone musicmakers who could not otherwise find work, given the French-language requirements of retail in Montreal which make it more difficult to get hired in record shops. In 1998, Cargo Canada collapsed, due mainly to mismanagement, overzealous promotion strategies, failed restructuring and the caprices of the global recording industry. Consequently, a number labels in Montreal were crippled. Although other companies stepped in to fill the gap, Cargo fits into a pattern of Montreal-based distributors notable for their short and troubled life-cycle—a standard narrative trajectory: a brief flurry of concentrated activity and promise, followed by mismanagement, restructuring, decline, and disappearance—thereby contributing in a direct way to the waxing and waning vigor of Montreal’s scene.

Beyond these industrial and institutional sites, the infrastructure for musicmaking in Montreal is determined by a complex set of economic, linguistic and social factors, and as a result is often understood to be inadequate, partial or unstable. In order to function effectively, derivative relied on industrial connections and licensing agreements fostered through their access to trans-regional networks, thereby orienting their activity away from the city. At the same time, they also mobilized locally-based resources and contacts to strengthen their distribution network. As Patti suggested:

If we transplanted the label with exactly the same contacts and with the networks we know to Winnipeg, I think we would die. You're just geographically far away and psychically too. So this is the perfect isolation—we're still so close to New York and Boston. We get bands coming up here because derivative's here and we get a nice little exchange of musics just out of the network.

The ideological affinity and geographic proximity to other (mainly American) musicmakers also favored derivative's role as a cultural intermediary, reinforcing the image of Montreal as both strategically placed (its "perfect isolation") and a place to better strategize.

At a more prosaic level, Cargo Canada and CBC-Radio served as industrial and institutional contexts which allowed derivative to support and expand their activity, putting them in daily contact with other musicians, labels and distribution labels while allowing them to remain based in Montreal. Their positions at Cargo Canada and the CBC allowed receptive markets and audiences to be easily identified, and new strategies for increasing the label's repertoire and reach could be easily accommodated. Combined with their keen musical sensibility and emerging business acumen, these strategies guided derivative's musical practices, shaping, and later reinforcing, the kind of habitus formed out of the very specificity of Montreal and its institutions and industries, confirming for them the singularity of the city's cultural life. Patti again:

Montreal appeals to me because it's isolated already. I like lower-expectation complex, so it's kind of like Canada reduced even more. So if you can hang on to an aesthetic sensibility against the odds it makes you even stronger. That's a really backwards and noble way to think about it, but it appeals to me on a really "primal" level.

This last comment, with its peculiar vision of Montreal, provides us with an image of musicmaking in the city which accentuates the importance of what Rob Shields has called "place-images" to the imaginative life of the city (Shields, 1991). These

representations are formed through the accretion of various signifiers to a specific view of the city, and in turn can be mobilized in particular ways to suit particular purposes. Patti's framing of the city struck me as a fascinating one because it offered a kind of ironic civic boosterism that suggested simultaneously a robustness and an anemia which were framed as virtues specific to Montreal. Conversations with other musicmakers made it clear that this tension is one that resonates throughout the rhetoric surrounding musicmaking in the city. Montreal's strength was its weakness, a curious irony, but one not without its historical precedents. What became apparent was that Montreal figured into musicmaking as a kind of bohemian enclave, one in which a music scene could flourish. Consider Patti's earlier little pond/big pond analogy about Montreal versus Toronto: this is a typical reading of Montreal among musicmakers, evoking an implicit political economy of the scene by linking the ambience of the city's vibrant alternative cultural life to its diminished economic state. In a city of limited ambitions, an expressive practice like musicmaking adopts a rhetoric and takes on a particular shape. For Patti and others, the vigor of the scene is inversely proportional to the city's financial state. In Montreal, the entrenched sense of anomie, where a desire to be musically active is heavily determined by the lack of industrial and/or institutional means to achieve that goal, has become a common trope associated with musicmaking in the city.³

Musicmaking in Montreal finds itself nourished by lack. What may be missing in terms of industrial infrastructure, for instance, is more than compensated for by a rich imaginative infrastructure that encourages an affective relationship to the city and which further entrenches musicmakers in Montreal, at the same time that it also encourages them to orient themselves to an "elsewhere." Musicmaking in Montreal is founded upon

a relationship to civic space marked by varying degrees of ambivalence but which sits beside a deep-rooted sense of commitment. It generates a discursive envelope which contains a certain sociomusical experience of the city which is also fraught with a variety of tensions, many of which are centered on the complex intersection of economics, politics, language, collective representations of place, etc. In an effort to get at the complexity of this experience of Montreal, this project brings forth a number related issues, primarily as a way of explaining how musicmaking relies upon a matrix of spatial strategies, social relations and representational practices. Two related products of these spatial practices I'm describing here are "scenes" and "bohemias," both of which are significant for the ways in which they stimulate, insulate and contain musical activity, at the same time that they reinforce, reinvigorate, or facilitate the negotiation of, certain social divisions and cultural distinctions.

Behind the Scene

Using terms such as "scene" and "bohemia" points the following discussion in a particular direction, namely a consideration of the relationship of musicmaking to the city. The links found between scenes, bohemia and the city are clearly bound up in one another in ways that influence their respective social, symbolic and material forms. What follows is an exploration of these links by way of analytical tools, conceptual frameworks and research methods which might best reveal the morphology of cultural life in Montreal. Independent anglophone music in Montreal is the chosen case study and is used as a way to work through a set of conceptual frameworks and research methods which can more adequately describe the cultural spaces associated with musicmaking.

The nature of musicmaking in the city is such that it can tell us a great deal about the connections between a specific mode of cultural production and the complex make-up of urban social space. Musicmaking's unique forms of cultural expression, its dense infrastructure and the informal nature of its social organization are by definition "urban." In the city, musicmaking takes on specific symbolic, social and material dimensions, all of which define and inform one another and the spaces in which they unfold.

Musicmaking requires people, material and symbolic resources, as well as a space of possibility, all of which the city supplies in ample quantities. These various amenities are readily identified, selected and organized according to the specific needs of musicmakers, who are keenly adapted idiosyncracies and demands of city life.

This is not to say that the nature of musicmaking in the suburbs, or elsewhere, is not without its own unique qualities; rather, the city, as a trope and topos, prods one to ask more compelling questions about the way in which sociality, musicmaking, the city and notion of "the urban" are mutually constituted. The city presents us with a range of "problems" : individuality versus solidarity, private versus public, remaining anonymous versus asserting one's self, quietism versus performance. Musicmaking shares in these problems and offers various solutions. The irrepressible need to assert and realize collective desires through collaborative activity and cultural expression are aspects of musicmaking which speak to its ameliorative power. It facilitates this by adopting and adapting to certain sociospatial forms, such as a scene or bohemia.

What, to be more precise, are some of the specific problems found in urban musicmaking? What sort of questions does it raise in terms of examining its more informal aspects? Its more institutionalized ones? Its spatial and social relations? In

trying to broaden the scope of these questions, I have been reminded of Robert Merton's work on sociological research, and in particular, his insistence that social research be guided by appropriately formulated questions. Merton put forward a fundamental dilemma that has lingered for four decades when he proposed that finding the right question to ask in sociology is often more difficult than answering it (1959: ix). He suggested also that a sociological inquiry must be motivated more than just asking simply "Why?" This question, Merton suggests, can be put to just about anything and thus any social phenomenon can be seen as overly-significant and "socially awesome." If we can ask "Why?" of every social event, doing sociological research is no longer a question of scale, of micro versus macro, but rather a question of containment, of setting up boundaries so as to determine which studies might be more valuable, and hence more valid or legitimate, than others. In Merton's estimation, there are more rigorous and economical ways to go about framing sociological examinations. He suggests that sociological inquiry be considered in relation to three principal components: originating questions, the rationale of the questions, and specifying questions. Originating questions are designed to identify sociological facts, explore the adequacy of sociological concepts, pose questions about empirical generalizations, etc. "The essential point" Merton states, "is that originating questions, comprising a prelude to the formulation of a problem, stem from a great variety of circumstances. They do not uniformly ask 'Why?' an observed social phenomenon is as it is" (xix).

Before beginning to formulate an originating question, it should be stated that the nature of musicmaking in the city provides researchers with a range of sociological possibilities, a fact revealed in the rich studies undertaken by, among others, Richard

Peterson in Nashville, Andy Bennett in (--), Barry Shanks in Austin, Texas, and Sara Cohen in Liverpool. Each of these studies has contributed to the field of popular music studies in invigorating ways, whether it be through deep ethnographic research (Bennett and Cohen) or by way of engaging with the usefulness of certain categories for describing musical practice (Shanks and Peterson). This project is inspired in large part by much of their work. However, what remains striking about these studies is the peculiar absence of discussions about the role played by the city in shaping the sociomusical experience. The circumstances, as Merton might suggest, surrounding musicmaking in the city are such that they prompt a number questions, all of which serve as preludes to the research that follows: What is it about the city which motivates or animates musicmaking? What is it about the forms of sociality engendered by the city that indelibly shape musicmaking? Why does musicmaking take the social shapes that it does? How might scene and/or bohemia be used as descriptors for informal social organization associated with musicmaking? How might these terms be employed to add coherence to a set of cultural practices and forms of expression and social relations which are at times elusive and amorphous? What is it about musicmaking that it bears so strongly upon the semiotic and sociological shape of the city? Why does it matter? What can an unveiling of the more mundane mechanics of musicmaking reveal to us about the nature of social relations in the city? What makes it a defining index of “cityness” (as Doreen Massey might suggest)? What, more precisely, is the relationship between the material and symbolic dimensions of musicmaking and the city? How is the urban imaginary influenced, underpinned, by musicmaking? How is the city imagined by musicmakers? What is the contribution of informally organized social groups to the city generally?

How do they contribute to the semiotic shape, the ambience, of the city? Are scene and bohemia adequately disposed to account for the sociospatial expression of musicmaking, or do they need better definition? Many of these questions are elided or obscured in many studies of musicmaking. The city remains important, however, as an active force which profoundly shapes the sociomusical experience. For many musicmakers, the image of the city, the city-as-scene, the city as figure and ground, are used as demonstrative gestures of differentiation, rhetorical and real strategies of distinction, and modes of engaging with place which are found throughout individual discussions and experiences of Montreal. How and what aspects of Montreal are talked are primary indicators of musicmakers' affective relationship to the city.

The rationale of the question is "the statement of the reasons why it is worth asking" (xix). This is the primary justification for research. There can be two principal rationales: firstly, that the research will have consequences for the sociological field in terms of theoretical innovation; secondly, that it will result in a kind of practical knowledge which can alter the experiences of those studied (certainly research undertaken with a view to altering social policies fits in this latter category). The role the question plays in terms of adding to systematic knowledge, suggesting that the research results will move understanding and thus the field forward, is perhaps the most salient component here. What might the questions posed above contribute to the field of popular music studies? I would contend that they would consider the collaborative activity, cultural expression, collective representation, and cultural space as reciprocally, symbiotically, tied to the city. This follows from Henri Lefebvre and his discussion of the three critical dimensions of space: spatial practices, representations of space and the

spaces of representation. The links between these three aspects of urban musicmaking have only been partially dealt with in recent discussions of scenes (Ruth Finnegan's work on Milton Keynes most fully describes these links). To be fair, it is the first of Lefebvre's definition of space, spatial practices, that has most fully realized in recent accounts of musicmaking. However, the latter two components, representations of space and spatial representations, are rarely discussed. They are, however, just as significant and just as revealing in terms of the culture of city life that to neglect them, to not consider the value of collective representation, abstracts the sociomusical experience from its context. This project takes this occlusion as its rationale for formulating questions about cultural expression, collective representation, social relations and spatial practices among Montreal musicmakers.

The final component Merton describes is that of the specifying questions. What the originary question lacked in specificity is compensated for here by posing questions that provide more sociological detail. It helps to focus the originary question by considering more facets of the research object. The specifying questions help to distill the originary question in such a way that the object of study can be brought into sharper focus. The principle questions dealt with here also accentuate the symbolic function of Montreal in relation to musicmaking. What are the unique qualities found in, or more pointedly, ascribed to musicmaking in Montreal? How is the image of Montreal as a bohemia articulated in different ways by different groups of musicmakers? How do these articulations break down along language lines? In what ways does a cultural phenomenon such as musicmaking reveal the complexity of social relations in Montreal? How does the iconic status of Montreal as cultural hub, a bohemia, register in accounts

that attempt to differentiate it from other cities? What is the social function of this distinctive image, as binding agent, as divisive force? In what ways are these distinctions differentially valued? In attracting a range of creative types from elsewhere, what aspects of Montreal life are emphasized or downplayed and to what end?

All three aspects of Merton's model of inquiry can help situate the study of musicmaking in Montreal as one which takes up questions about the social and spatial relation of musicmaking to the city. Thinking about these components as gauges by which the explanatory power of a study of musicmaking can be measured is one way in which the theoretical value and efficacy of certain methodologies can be assessed. Taking a lead from Merton, this project has as one its primary motivations a consideration of what methodologies might be best combined in order to provide a thicker description of musicmaking in Montreal. It proposes three principle frameworks which lay out critical analytical distinctions: the experiential, the materialist and discursive frameworks. Each one is employed as a way of differentiating between the sociospatial properties of musicmaking in the city. These conceptual frameworks are complemented by different methods for analysis: qualitative methods such as mapping analysis, diary entries, and interviews, political economy and discourse analysis. We can take up, briefly, the usefulness of the methods attached to each framework. Mapping as an analytical mode can provide a more schematic view of the city, graphically representing the major sites and locations associated with musicmaking. It is one grounded, however, in a certain kind of experience of place and as such is oriented towards tracing out the individual routes and routines that musicmakers use to navigate through the city. Alongside these mapping exercises, a broader approach to the

materiality of city life is considered, principally as a method which pulls the discussion away from the more intimate aspects of the experiential framework. A political economy of Montreal establishes musicmaking as a cultural practice which has historical specificities, shaped as it is by material forces. Finally, discourse analysis can provide insight in how collective representations of places are narrativized, mythologized and actualized in sociomusical experience. The role the image of the city plays in musicmaking, more specifically, how a particular place-image functions to orient musical activity, is a primary focus here.

All of these methods can be utilized to answer of the following questions: What does the nature of a musicmaking tell us about the relationship of certain modes of cultural production to an urban space like Montreal? What kind of spaces are produced through musicmaking? What sort of social function do they serve? What images of the city are privileged in musicmaking and how do those images inform musical practice? How does an image of the city function to orient musical activity? What does it mean when the functionality of a city is read according to the demands of an aesthetic experience of place? The value of these questions resides in their ability to frame a discussion of urban musicmaking according to its material, symbolic and existential dimensions and they inform much of the discussion about the relation of scene and bohemia to Montreal.

The first chapter, “The Social Production of Cultural Spaces,” addresses the lack of theoretical rigour associated with a selection of concepts frequently used to describe cultural production. Four terms, art world, bohemia, subculture, and scene are often employed to frame examinations of the nature of culture-driven, informally organized,

social groups in the city. All of them raise provocative questions about the unifying and divisive forces which structure social life and cultural production in the city. These four terms will be examined in more detail as part of an effort to bring out the descriptive salience of each. Bohemia and scene are the privileged terms, as they come closest to describing the aspects of musical production in Montreal and can more adequately encompass the complex nature of cultural life under consideration. Bohemia is understood here as a specific urban sociocultural phenomenon notable for its contributions to the semiotic shape of the city. While it is not entirely separate from bohemia, scene is situated as a species of cultural space and set of practices which depend upon various industries and institutions. The object here is not to discard one of these terms in favour of another; rather, it is to relate these terms to one another as a way of getting at the vagaries cultural life in Montreal.

The central focus in the second chapter, “Setting the Scene: Frameworks for Analysis,” considers the value of the terms scene and bohemia in relation to musicmaking. Musicmaking is described here as made up of a set of actors, institutions, activities and discourses within which the notions of scene and bohemia circulate as spatial tropes. Consideration of what Alan Blum calls a scene’s “fundamental ambiguity” will lead to an elaboration of three frameworks essential to the following chapters. The experiential framework is centered upon subjective and intersubjective accounts of musicmaking in Montreal. The materialist framework is expressly concerned with getting at the more abstract but no less consequential aspects of musicmaking particularly as they relate to spatial properties associated with scene and bohemia. The discursive is focused upon the various mediations which shape the experience of

musicians in Montreal. Various narratives and myths will be considered as part of the symbolic resources which allow the scene to maintain its coherence.

Building on the three frameworks, the third chapter, “If Ethnography’s the Answer, What’s the Question?,” undertakes a more in-depth discussion of methodology. Qualitative, materialist and discourse analysis are used, fitting into the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks respectively. The strengths and weaknesses, as well as how these frameworks and their respective methodologies might best be combined, will be the primary focus. The chosen research methods—mapping exercises, diary entries and interviews—help to establish a foundation for the following chapters. This discussion demonstrates the usefulness of the chosen methodologies, as well as how they might best complement one another to provide a “thicker description” of musicmaking in Montreal.

“Is This the Next Hip Place?,” the penultimate chapter, outlines Montreal music history as a way of establishing the specificity of musicmaking in both a materialist and discursive sense. This chapter has a historical dimension, although its latter half is devoted to the place of musicmaking in contemporary Montreal. There is an in-depth consideration of the function of music scenes and bohémias as indices of a city’s cultural vitality. It also addresses the diversity of conditions that allow the scene, and its manifestation of a bohemian atmosphere, to function as a sign of a city’s “cityness.” Through a series of interviews the telling of different tales reveals how various social and cultural divisions are identified, evaluated, negotiated, resisted or elided in the production, reproduction and privileging of cultural spaces.

“Let Us Compare Mythologies,” the final chapter, examines recent musicmaking in Montreal. It focuses on the role that place-image and mythmaking play in shaping the current sociomusical experience of the city. The primary source material is based on maps drawn by respondents, their diaristic accounts of the scene, and interviews. The maps differ from traditional regional maps in that they provide an intimate cartography of the scene, made up of individual movements through the city, noting sites of sociomusical significance. Much of this chapter considers in specific detail the nature of the myths and narratives which serve as the connective tissue for musicmakers, underscoring the rhetorical weight borne by an image of Montreal as a bohemian enclave. This material acts as an entry point into an examination of the ways in which various cultural practices help shape movement through the city, attending also to the rhetoric employed when attempts are made to bridge the perceived gaps between French and English musical worlds.

The parables found on St. Laurent and, perhaps with more insistence, in the story of derivative records, spur a deeper consideration of the social and spatial dimensions of cultural expression and collaborative activity in Montreal. They were introduced to prompt questions, *qua* Merton, about the way in which certain narratives, myths and images are utilized to anchor musicmakers to the city, forming symbolic systems which also allow them negotiate and accommodate longstanding social divisions and cultural distinctions in the context of sociomusical practice. Described throughout the following chapters are patterns of sociability, interaction and belonging, mobility and circulation, connected and animated by a social energy and creative possibilities, which in turn cut through and define spaces such as scenes, bohemias and the city.

On a more general level, this is a discussion which examines the tensions and relations found between a political economy of cultural institutions and industries, a spatial analysis of patterns of fixity and flow, and the larger issue of the status of community and collective representation. These are all aspects of musicmaking in Montreal which are deeply enmeshed in reticular circuits of reciprocity which will gradually be disentangled. For the time being, however, keeping this dense agglomeration of social and symbolic practices in mind allows us to attend to the social value and function of musicmaking, delving into some of its richest and rewarding urban manifestations and forms.

NOTES

¹ Lefebvre, 1996: 224.

² For more on the role of Brave New Waves in shaping the national independent music scene, see “Did You Get My Message on the People’s Radio?” in Barclay, Jack and Schneider, eds. Have Not Been the Same: The CanRock Renaissance, Toronto: ECW Press, 2001. pp. 29-58.

³ See Stahl, 2001.

Chapter One

“The Social Production of Cultural Spaces”

The sociological shape of artistic worlds has long been an object of fascination for scholars seeking to explain the social function and value of cultural production. Beyond the singular artistic act, there exists a social world in which the artist finds him or herself, one which provides, among other things, support networks, various resources (both symbolic and material), inspiration, and labour. The works of Pierre Bourdieu (1980, 1984, 1992), Howard Becker (1976, 1982), Richard Peterson (1976), Paul Hirsch (1971), Paul DiMaggio (1976), Diane Crane (1976, 1992), Janet Wolff (1981; 1983), Will Straw (1991, 2001), Andy Bennett (2000), Alan Blum (2001), and Niklas Luhmann (2000), among others, exemplify attempts to grapple with these social aspects of cultural production. While theoretically and methodologically divergent in terms of approaches, many of these scholars have been either directly or indirectly concerned with the social worlds associated with creative labour, and many have tried to fashion analytical models which might more fully capture their manifold dimensions. This is a substantial body of literature, one that has over time defined a field of study which has also considered issues such as class, ethnicity and gender, politics and economics in relation to cultural production. There is a theoretical richness found in these varied depictions of a range of social worlds, studies that in turn have generated vigorous debate as to how society, art and culture inform one another. This richness is evident in the diverse perspectives on the nature of cultural production, a sub-discipline of sociology which attempts to describe rules and processes of change and innovation (DiMaggio, 1976; Hirsch, 1971; Peterson, 1976; Straw 1991), outline institutional practices and their relation to processes of

inclusion and exclusion (Levine, 1972), provide taxonomies of actors and roles (Becker 1976, 1982), and describe status games and the hierarchical structure of these worlds (Bourdieu, 1984, 1992; Crane 1976, 1992). These studies represent a small cross-section of the larger body of scholarly work that addresses the social aspects of cultural production, and as such, they form the backdrop against which the following discussion is set.

It is worth noting here that at various points, this small body of literature reveals a number of elisions and absences. Some of the accepted vocabulary, namely terms such as art world, subculture, scene and bohemia, is not easily disposed to providing the theoretical detail certain cultural spaces and practices require. As a way of addressing the concerns raised by the usefulness of this terminology, the following discussion outlines some of the primary issues germane to the broader aspects of the social production of culture. This lays the groundwork for a better account of the vocabulary most often to describe the kinds of informal social organizations affiliated with cultural production in the city. From there, it is possible to identify some of the limits of this terminology, taking the example of musicmaking as a mode of cultural production which has at various moments fallen under the aegis of categories such as art world, subculture, scene and bohemia. Finally, pointing to the limitations of these select categories can accentuate the theoretical utility of other terms, particularly when it comes to considerations of much more specific, primarily spatial, dimensions associated with musicmaking.

The Social Production of Culture

Cultural sociology... is concerned with the social processes of all cultural production, including those forms of production which can

be designated as ideologies. This defines a field, but the work now being done, from so many different starting points, is still a convergence of interests and methods, and there are still crucial theoretical differences at every stage.

(Raymond Williams)¹

The sociology of art enables us to see that artistic practice is situated practice, the mediation of aesthetic codes, what Bourdieu calls the “cultural unconscious,” and ideological, social and material processes and institutions.

(Janet Wolff)²

There have been, over the latter half of the twentieth century at least, a number of different metaphors and analogies employed to describe the social interactions associated with cultural production. From circles and networks (Kadushin, 1976) to simplex (Peterson and White, 1979), and extended milieux (Purdue, 1997), these terms are employed to describe the connections and lines of continuity that bind together the actors, activities and institutions involved in cultural production, used to name the distinctive social worlds centered around creative labour.³ Two other perspectives are also relevant to this discussion of cultural production, both flecked with a sociological bias and each addressing the worlds produced through aesthetic acts. Briefly, the work of Richard A. Peterson and Janet Wolff can be sketched out in order to highlight two modes of analysis which frame the discussion of cultural production in not entirely different ways.

Peterson, in his foreword to the brief edited volume, “The Production of Culture,” (1976) positions the collection in relation to longstanding discussions about society and culture, and by extension, in relation to larger sociological concerns. Here he identifies three dominant perspectives: culture and society are autonomous (the “autonomous culture cycle” exemplified in the work of Sorokin); social structure creates culture (the “materialist” view proffered by Meyerson and Katz, Blumer and Sapir); culture creates

social structure (the “idealist” view, represented by Adorno, MacDonald, and Searle among others) (Peterson, 8-9). As an antidote to these perspectives, Peterson puts forward the “production perspective,” which he suggests focuses on “the processes by which elements of culture are fabricated in those milieux where symbol-system production is most self-consciously the center of activity” (10). The production perspective, according to Peterson, situates creative labour and aesthetic strategies as organizing principles for the social worlds surrounding selected cultural practices.

Peterson envisions the production-of-culture perspective as one that sidesteps two dominant biases in the study of the symbolic nature of culture. The first has blinders due to its insistence that certain domains (art, science and religion) follow a logic of differentiation which he calls the “unique quest.” In this case, the commonalities between the three domains are dispensed with, and while each is expressly centered upon symbol-making, any critical links or parallels are dismissed. The second bias has to do with an entrenched set of distinctions that are made between high culture and popular or mass culture, a bias which has meant that popular culture is often omitted from serious academic scrutiny.⁴ This latter perspective he names the “false virtue” bias. For Peterson, the production-of-culture perspective gets at the infrastructure which mediates between these two realms and renders their differences moot. He makes the claim for this perspective as an addition to the society and culture debates (making reference to Talcott Parsons) and suggests that perhaps a genetic model of culture is a more feasible one. According to this model, “culture is the code by which social structures reproduce themselves from day to day and generation to generation” (16). Culture and its modes of reproduction are for Peterson simultaneously “produced” and “genetic,” two visions of

production which are not incompatible, but a bit vague in terms of how it might then be analyzed.

The groundwork laid by Peterson is given more in-depth consideration by Janet Wolff, where a more thorough attempt to account for the various mediations which shape culture reveals some of the limitations of previous models of cultural production. In The Social Production of Art (1993), Wolff contends that much of the work done in this area suffers from several blind spots, most tellingly in the scant attention paid to the political economy of cultural production (Wolff, 48). As she sees it, the “sociology of art is the study of the practices and institutions of artistic production” (Wolff, 139). Notably, there is a qualifier, as this avenue of study should also “disclose the way in which these practices are embedded in and informed by broader social and political processes and institutions, with economic forces playing a particularly important role” (ibid). Her work has the benefit of being informed by the then-slowly expanding field of cultural studies, as evident in her emphasis throughout on the work of Marx (historical materialism), Raymond Williams (his theory of cultural materialism), Louis Althusser (his structuralist theory of ideology and interpellation), Anthony Giddens (his theory of structuration) and Jacques Lacan (his theory of subjectivity). We have not escaped the culture and society debates here, but their nuanced complexities reveal themselves in a manner much subtler than that found in previous accounts. Wolff’s work, as outlined here, but also in her Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art (1983), makes it clear that some formulation of the relationship between structure and agency has to be more clearly articulated and theorized so that the specificity of cultural production can be more accurately described.

In order that this specificity of structure/agency analyses might be more clearly refined, Wolff derives her primary arguments from Marx, particularly his notion of creative labour. For Marx, she notes, all human labour, including creative labour, is a defining characteristic of humankind (termed by Marx as *homo faber*). Simply by having the ability to alter its material environment, based on practical, idealistic, future-oriented or abstract goals, humankind distinguishes itself from other species. Citing Vazquez's consideration of Marx in relation to artistic production, Wolff suggests that work is *the* basic human activity, either motivated by necessity or a desire to manipulate the world around it to suit its purposes, wherein artistic labour has an affinity with all labour:

The relationship between art and labor thus lies in their shared relationship to the human essence; that is, they are both creative activities by means of which man produces objects that express him, that speak for and about him. Therefore, there is no radical opposition between art and work.

(Vazquez, 1973: 63; cited in Wolff, 16)

For Wolff there are social, material and ideological structures, all interpenetrating one another, which determine the nature of creative practice (24). As she makes clear in discussions of human agency and creativity, there are multiple determinations which both enable and constrain human action generally and creative labour specifically. She frames her discussion of creative agency according to the terms laid out by Giddens, referring to his theory of structuration as one model which attempts to understand the relationship between structure and agency. (These theories of structuration will be referred to again in discussions of Bourdieu below as well as in succeeding chapters). The tension found between conceiving of individuals (and artists) as free creative agents or as determined subjects is one which can hardly be resolved resolutely; rather, Wolff suggests, the subject (in this case, the artist) should be seen as historically located whereby the

aesthetic serves as a mediation between “ideology and cultural expression” (63). This is not to say that cultural artifacts are expressions or reflections of ideology (one argument Peterson also dismisses); instead, the “material conditions of artistic production, technological and institutional, mediate this expression and determine its particular form in the cultural product” (63). The role these elements play in shaping spaces affiliated with cultural production should not be understated.

Art Worlds, Bohemias, Subcultures and Scenes

As stated above, sociological accounts of the worlds formed around specific types of cultural production have relied upon a number of descriptive categories in order to outline the numerous social relations, modes of production, aesthetic strategies, etc., which make up these worlds. Four principle categories are particularly germane to the discussion of musicmaking: art worlds, bohemias, subcultures and scenes. The theoretical salience of these categories becomes more pronounced when they are considered in relation to a specific mode of cultural production; here musicmaking will serve to accentuate the usefulness of these modes of classification. Musicmaking’s specificities can place in relief some of the limits of these modes and suggest what aspects of the categories might retain their relevance in the analysis of music-based cultural production. Musicmaking is made up of a variety of different practices, actors (and not solely musicians), institutions and industries which in their diversity and varied orientations, resist the narrow parameters some of these categories use to define cultural activity. In this sense, musicmaking poses a number of provocative problems for those who might want to document the social relations which bind its social world together.

The differences between art world, bohemia, subculture and scene warrant more attention, as their surface similarities obscure important analytical distinctions when it comes to examinations of the sociomusical experience. It is clear that they are all focused on the nature of the social in collective cultural practice, and each in their way frame that activity as guided by processes of differentiation which separate them from other social practices. In this sense, they are, as Niklas Luhmann contends, guided by a logic of functional differentiation and operative closure (which makes them subject to systematic analysis in his estimation) (Luhmann,, 2000). Internally, each of these categories has in place an “Other” against which certain activities are evaluated, whether it is the bourgeoisie, the mainstream/status quo, “straight society” or commercially-inclined artists. They are also social worlds people choose to be involved with; as a result, their social structure is often characterized by a looseness, as many participants are aligned with one another through voluntary acts of belonging (although, as we’ll see, a strong ethics of commitment also exists). In this sense, they also resist the kind of closure Luhmann describes. They are also shot through with discourses which revolve around notions such as authenticity, and have consequently developed a variety of mechanisms whose function is to maintain (and also contain), formally or informally, the integrity of the group and its practices. With these general comments in mind then, our attention can now turn to a more in-depth consideration of art worlds, bohemias, subcultures and scenes, with an emphasis placed on those points where their relevance to a study of musicmaking might be better ascertained.

Art Worlds

The artworld allows for such safe postmodern distancing. Just like the treadmill fetishists need. Just as reduced lazy perverts spout when they're frantically trying to defend themselves against criminal prosecution. Grubbing job-hunting artists and art aficionados who prefer art that "raises questions" are certainly as disgusting as those rubbered dilettantes who recognize that the answers are what you masturbate over. Once you're out of school, you can't appreciate mere questions. Unless, of course, you'd prefer to not acknowledge the responses that those questions produce in public.

So better to just shut your fucking mouth.

(Whitehouse, "Cruise," 2001)

It seems to me that there is no consensus within the art world about what all this stuff is being done for, who benefits, and what the nature of those benefits might be. So I want to ask why people make art (or any other cultural activity) in the first place, and what they get from doing it.

(Brian Eno)⁵

"Art worlds" as a term describing the coordination of activities, actors and institutions in the production of art is notable for its lingering tenacity. It has fostered numerous debates and discussions as to how aesthetic decisions are made, careers and reputations are built, as well as how certain actors and institutions serve to determine the significance of certain art and artistic practices. As an early attempt to outline the art world, Arthur Danto, writing in 1964, developed a "matrix" theory of art and art worlds, attempting to contrast representational and expressionist art as prime examples of artistic forms which guide evaluative mechanisms and social relations in the art world. In this context, he claims that "(t)o see something as art requires something the eye cannot descry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld"

(1964: 580). In an afterword to this piece, Danto elaborates on this definition of the art world as a “loose affiliation of individuals who have enough by way of theory and history that they are able to practice what the art historian Michael Baxandall terms ‘inferential art criticism,’ which in effect simply is historical explanations of works of art.” (1992: 42). As George Dickie, a name most often associated with the institutional theory of art, might suggest, this notion of “looseness” is so vague as to be somewhat meaningless (1993: 77). Contrary to Danto’s depiction of Dickie’s institutional theory of art (as a social institution), he too believes that there is no “deliberative body” which makes decisions as to what is and is not art (as Brian Eno also notes above). Danto continues:

The art world is the discourse of reasons institutionalized, and to be a member of the art world is, accordingly, to have learned what it means to participate in the discourse of reasons for one’s culture. In a sense, the discourse of reasons for a given culture is a sort of language game, governed by rules of play, and for reasons parallel to those that hold that only where there are games are there wins and losses and players, so only where there is an art world is there art. (1992: 46)

By his own admission, however, Danto was describing something different than what he is often accused of:

The expression “artworld” sounds vaguely sociological, though at the time I had in mind something quite different, moved as I was in those years by the poetry with which writers like Wittgenstein used the word “world.” I actually meant a world consisting of works of art, a self-enriching community of ontologically complex objects, often inter-referential (or, as the expression later came to be used “intertextual”), and which above all had a historical vector, so that something could be part of that world at one time but not an earlier time.”

(Danto, 1993: 203)

It is clear by now, that the notion of “world,” at least as Dickie interpreted it, has clearly been lost in current usage of “art world.” Regardless of how the definition of art

world has since been construed, both Dickie and Danto are clearly interested in the social relations found in the art world. Yet, there is a striking asociality and absence of agency which characterizes their depictions. It may in part be due to the fact that this particular view of the social production of culture deals with the status of rarefied texts, and thereby undertheorizes the nature of the social context of art in a manner that undermines its broader sociological utility. Art worlds as viewed from this perspective are tied explicitly to criticism and ontological debates about the difference between what is and what is not art, and are thus located firmly within more formally organized institutionalized networks and discursive spaces, as well as debates, and do not see art as primarily a collective activity or experience.

Howard Becker offers a slightly less arcane, admittedly less philosophical, and more informal vision of art worlds, which according to him “consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art” (1982: 34). This is most clearly a social world. He notes:

Members of art worlds coordinate the activities by which work is produced by referring to a body of conventional understandings embodied in common practice and in frequently used artifacts. The same people often cooperate repeatedly, routinely, in similar ways to produce similar works, so that we can think of an art world as an established network of cooperative links.

(34-35)

The interdependent nature of activity in the art world is stressed here, existing as a kind of extended network of social relations within which its members orient themselves primarily towards cultural production. In Becker’s view, art worlds are not hemmed in by well-defined boundaries, nor are they completely separate from the worlds from which

they are attempting to distinguish themselves (36). Art worlds for him are made up of various resources and support personnel, critics, curators, all of which inter-relate and are dependent upon discourses about the legitimacy of art, strategies of reputation-building, and the maintenance of gatekeeping/custodial mechanisms, etc. His is a more quotidian approach, and Becker's methodology, accordingly, frames "aesthetic judgments as characteristic phenomena of collective activity" (39). This inserts some distance between the more erudite concerns of the status of art and this more pedestrian conception of art worlds. This fits into Becker's standard methodological approach, which is to attend to "mundane social organizational problems" (39). He says elsewhere that "the world of art mirrors society at large" (Becker, 1976: 55). Far from seeing the art world as operating according to rarefied social and aesthetic codes, Becker positions the art world as another example of a social world governed by institutions and individuals, by access to resources (symbolic, material and personal), and by constant struggles over value.

Two contemporary studies have attempted to rehabilitate the notion of art world in relation to sociomusical practices. We have had a brief return to the notion of art worlds courtesy Paul Lopes' recent book on the "jazz art world" (2002). In it, Lopes lays out a detailed description of the evolution, over the course of the twentieth century, of a musical world where various struggles over the legitimacy of jazz forms have taken place within the pages of journals such as *Downbeat* and *Metronome*. He describes in minute detail how the uneven cross-pollination of cultivated and vernacular forms of black and white music produced a range of musical styles, each of which came appended with their own claims to legitimacy. The emphasis on the discursive construction of legitimacy, one of the art world's primary vehicles for consecrating "good art," is explored also in

Bernard Gendron's From Montmartre to the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde (2002). In this, the other contemporary study, Gendron traces out the role played by institutions and individuals in separating out and conferring privileged status upon certain musicians and musical texts in the formation of a rock canon. While not explicitly framed as an art world argument (it clearly shares something with the bohemian model also), the role of the media, specifically critics, in shaping the legitimacy of certain musical acts and practices, refers us back to notions of the art world and the struggle over aesthetic value as they reveal themselves in debates about the Beatles, jazz, punk, etc.

More pointedly, in terms of analytical categories, what sort of descriptive and/or theoretical utility does the term "art world" have for us when it comes to musicmaking? Certain genres of music would seem to lend themselves more easily to the art world model. Contemporary avant-garde music, with its narrowly defined social relations, institutional affiliations, many of them explicitly academic, and rarified language, neatly exemplifies the art world model. Jazz too, Lopes suggests, can be placed under the aegis of "art world." Other genres, however, seem less amenable to being rendered an art world. For example, as Gendron argues, there have been historical moments in the development of rock and roll music where symbolic struggles over aesthetic value have played a significant role in that music's definition as well as the discourses which shape its critical and popular reception. However, it would be difficult to classify rock's social relations according to the narrow terms the idea of the "art world" implies. Rock, and other forms of popular music, evade the strictures of "art world" because they are aligned with the popular, the mundane, the everyday, and may even escape the definition of art in

some people's view (despite various attempts to define an "aesthetics of rock"). Rock's populism precludes it from fitting easily into the narrow discursive envelope that "art world" as a category offers, suffering from what Peterson identified above as the "false virtue" bias where mass "popular" culture is viewed in a mainly pejorative fashion.

The usefulness of the term "art world" resides in its emphasis on the various relations, institutional and social, within which art is enmeshed. Art as it is conceived in these definitions is not just about artifactuality; rather, it is implicated within broader networks and associations which link it to social practice (however rarefied or esoteric). The value of the art world perspective is that it offers us a model of artistic practice which extends beyond the simple artifact, proclaiming instead that the aesthetic value of any art object (or cultural good) is clearly contingent upon its status within a complex set of institutions and their respective practices. It also demonstrates how autonomy as a social and discursive practice is maintained through these networks. It can be argued, rather effectively, that the notion of art world has a somewhat restricted definition and, therefore, limited theoretical use value beyond accounting for the arcane evaluative mechanisms used to determine aesthetic value. The implication here seems to be that there is a homology at work: "art world" as a descriptive category best suits those sociocultural forms which are heavily invested in institutionalized processes of consecration, have been historically fraught by crises of legitimation, and are shot through with competing notions of authenticity.

Bohemia

A bohemian may be defined as the only kind of gentleman permanently in temporary difficulties who is neither a sponge nor a

cheat. He is a type that has existed in all ages and always will exist. He is a man who lacks certain elements necessary to success in this world, who manages to keep fairly even with the world, by dint of ingenious shift and expedient; never fully succeeding, never wholly failing. He is a man, in fact, who can't swim, but can tread water.

(H.C. Bunner, 1896)

In addition to the glamour of the free, dreamy interludes of bohemian life as popularly conceived, bohemia is a necessity to certain types. It is the asylum of the egoist. For the opportunist it appears to be the most direct road to intimacy with the brilliant and creative and even the most ordinary occasions combine the cultured atmosphere with the unconventional.

(George Snyderman and William Josephs, 1939)

If the term “art worlds” carries with it connotations of a kind of leaden institutionalism, “bohemia” too bears its own dated associations. First appearing in France during the 1830s, later finding wide circulation through the writings of Henri Murger in mid-nineteenth century Paris, “bohemia” reached its apex in terms of popular usage during the Beat movement of the fifties, fading into sporadic use during the later half of the twentieth century (although Simon Frith saw punk as a sub-species of bohemia in the late 70s).⁶ It is a term which remains germane to the discussion at hand because during this hundred and seventy-year period the “bohemia” has come to describe a range of historical moments and durable alternative traditions which took the notion of socially-situated cultural practice as crucial to its self-definition. Cafés and cabarets were spaces where bohemia flourished, feeding on the diversity and the stark contrasts found in the changing metropolis. In fact, bohemia was intimately wrapped up with the evolution of the modern city, both defined and defining it: “Against images of the metropolis as the chaotic site of a harsh and undisciplined modernity, the bohemians promoted notions of the city as infinitely knowable and nourishing” (Stansell, 2000: 15).

There has been a resurgence in the notion of bohemia evident in an expanding selection of texts (Elizabeth Wilson's The Glamorous Outcasts, 2000; Jerrold Seigel's Bohemian Paris, 1986; Christine Stansell's, American Moderns, 2000), which seek to document the many dimensions of bohemia, sometimes nostalgically (Dan Franck, 2001; Ross Wetzsteon, 2002) and sometimes by way of revising accepted histories (Wilson on women artists and companions to male artists, for example). These works are part of a longer critical reflection on the nature of bohemia, but their currency now has much to do with a renewed interest in the culture of cities. They have helped, in some respects, to salvage "bohemia" from its reduction to a quaint pejorative or dusty archaism, reclaiming it as an essential and defining facet of modern urban life. This revival offers an antidote to the kinds of scabrous claims people such as Norman Podhoretz could make about bohemia as the Beats' success was slowly attenuated in the late 1950s and early 60s:

The Bohemianism of the 1950s...is hostile to civilization; it worships primitivism, instinct, energy, "blood." To the extent that it has intellectual interests at all, they run to mystical doctrines, (and) irrationalist philosophies.... The only art the new Bohemians have any use of is jazz, mainly of the cool variety. Their predilection for bop language is a way of demonstrating solidarity with the primitive vitality and spontaneity they find in jazz and of expressing contempt for coherent, rational discourse which, being a product of the mind, is in their view a form of death.

(Norman Podhoretz, 1958)

This sentiment is not reserved solely for the like of Kerouac and Ginsberg. More recently, David Brooks has appropriated the term, conflating "bohemian" with "bourgeois," to create the dismissive "bobo," a term used to describe the role played by a certain social class in processes such as gentrification, etc (Brooks, 2000).⁷ Wilson herself notes the function of bohemia as a way of anticipating the inevitability of

gentrification, claiming that bohemians “had always colonized seedy, marginal districts of cities, but an inexorable law decreed that every Bohemia of the Western world would be subject to gentrification” (Wilson, 41-42).⁸ These sorts of negative or nostalgic associations accruing to the term bohemia over the latter half of the twentieth century are unfortunate, as bohemia probably describes certain contemporary urban sociocultural practices in a manner which art worlds can only do partially. The discussion which follows is meant to re-energize some of the positive valences of the term “bohemia,” where it will be argued that bohemia still retains some of its theoretical utility, even today, as an overview of its origins and usage can ably demonstrate.

For many, bohemia is a social world populated by artists and their coteries who have disavowed the mainstream or “the bourgeoisie,” a cultural space finely held together by manifestos, poems, paintings and dozens of self-portraits. As a term it first appears in the 1830s (usually to describe the group surrounding Victor Hugo and his acolytes (Miller, 1977; Seigel, 1986)), and is transcribed from the French word for gypsy, *bohémien* (which took the origin of gypsies to be the country of Bohemia, now the Czech Republic). Bohemianism is generally characterized by the stance taken by its members against the bourgeoisie. However, as Seigel and Wilson make clear, the relationship between the bourgeoisie and bohemians has always been a fraught one. The bourgeoisie have a particular fascination for the marginal factions of social life, and the bohemian sensibility is marked by a refinement and cultivation which shares much with its supposed “Other.” It can be said that the bohemian and the bourgeoisie occupied the same field, as Bourdieu suggests, as both imply, require and attract one another. In his use of the term “field,” Bourdieu means to define a hierarchically structured set of social

positions, based around a select set of social interests which lead to the imposition of cultural distinctions: “Every field is the site of a more or less openly declared struggle for the definition of the legitimate principles of division of the field” (Wacquant, 1992: 242). The struggle for cultural and social legitimacy between bohemia and the bourgeoisie was there at their inception. Bohemia, appearing at an historical moment when modernity has its first stirrings, acquires its strongest definition at the same time a bourgeois society is also emerging, inseparable poles defining the field of cultural production.

The term “bourgeois,” as defined by Seigel, has multiple resonances, most of which have as their source the social situation in early nineteenth-century France (and Paris specifically). After the French Revolution, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the bourgeois was singled out in many ways: for the soldier, it was any civilian; for the country resident, any city dweller. For artists it was an epithet and term of abuse and would become the most damning form of insult in the newly emerging studio system which was unfolding in Paris. Paris in the nineteenth century was a city marked by stark contrasts in wealth. A new social order had emerged after the Revolution, one which would become even more of a social fact during and after the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. While the aristocracy was slowly dissolving, along with its privileged social status, a more complex form of urban sociality was asserting itself. It was clear that many of the new bourgeoisie had acquired high social status courtesy their income from inheritances, from property and family position, while others gained their elevated social station through hard work and financial speculation. This signaled the emergence of a new entrepreneurial class. Among the bourgeoisie, there was an incomplete break with the

ancient regime and its aristocratic predilections, a social rupture which would echo throughout nineteenth-century France. The older bourgeois was more inclined to side with the established order, as it seems to confirm and maintain their social status. The new bourgeoisie, on the other hand, might be more inclined to think about change and progress as ways forward. These are the principle strands of thinking which would co-exist in a kind of productive tension, fuelling a conflicted bourgeois sensibility throughout most of the nineteenth century.

As Seigel notes, the ideological split between these two views came into focus after the 1830 Revolution. Out of the embers of that particular event appeared what was known as the Bourgeois Monarchy. There were two groups associated with the Bourgeois Monarchy: the Party of Movement and the Party of Resistance. The Party of Movement was on the politically left side of the equation, which demanded freedom of the press and of association. They envisioned a politics open to the lower tiers of French society, where small shopkeepers and artisans would remain linked, creating a social space which wanted to do away with the privileges which kept both groups separated. The Party of Resistance was more conservative and resisted change and wanted to put limits on political debate as well as organization. They were directing their politics towards the upper echelons of society, catering to the whims of the higher classes, one in which the urban elite would occupy privileged status. Eventually, the right-wing Party of Resistance would dominate.

This new French society, post-Revolution, needed its art and literature to reflect societal change. In this new context, however, academic classicism would dominate for the better part of two decades. Classicism was the official culture of the royal court and

privileged groups such as the aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie, and as a cultural form, it shared an affinity with the Party of Resistance. Bohemia, on the other hand, would begin to separate itself from the academy and classicism, directing its attentions to the lower classes, to the margins of society, attempting in many ways to ensure that the bourgeois society, then in ascendance, remain open to new energies and ideas. The two poles which defined the field of cultural production in nineteenth-century Paris were slowly becoming entrenched (Seigel, 1986; Graña, 1964).

Much of this was happening in a context marked also by social upheaval. As old traditions disappeared, as communal bonds were being dissolved and reconstructed in urban settings, socially segregated individuals were no longer operating in common purpose or interest. Society, in the eyes of the members of the dominant culture, could become atomized and anarchic. People would treat one another as means to ends, pursuing individual interest at the expense of social good or justice. Those who had access to education would seek to maintain their social power (see Bourdieu below). Class distinctions would come to be marked by stark contrasts, and have material consequences, visible in all aspects of city life. The poor were excluded and demoralized, a threat, the upper classes thought, to the new stability as well to this new society's claims that it could provide the means of self-development for everyone. Individuality and social development were dilemmas to which bohemia was counterposed as a solution or alternative. Bohemia was not a world outside bourgeois life, but an expression of the conflict that arose within it. Bourgeois progress called for the dissolution of traditional restrictions on personal development while the need for social harmony and stability required that new and different limits be set up in their place.

What were these limits and at what point does personal cultivation stop being beneficial or acceptable? Bohemia straddles the border of these ideas, pushing the limits and social margins in some ways and in others confirming them.

Socially, bohemia is made up primarily of artists, young people, downtrodden characters, eccentrics, visionaries, political radicals, cultural rebels, people rejected by their families, the disenchanting and the disenfranchised. These were all people who shared a similar disdain for the bourgeoisie, refusing or unable to take on the roles prescribed for them by the dominant culture. The people who would become most associated with bohemia (Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Hugo, etc.) were those who found that certain aspects of their lives could be employed as a way of acting out the conflicts inherent in the bourgeois character. Bohemia in this sense is the appropriation of marginal lifestyles by young and not-so-young bourgeoisie, for the dramatization of ambivalence toward their social identities and destinies. A paradox then: there appears to be a simultaneous rejection of the bourgeois lifestyle alongside a yearning to join it, an expression of an entrepreneurial spirit which was impossible to entirely disentangle from a vision of capitalism's new emphasis on a self-possessed individuality geared primarily towards capital accumulation and the resulting alienation of labour. This tension was in many ways a defining characteristic of the bohemian attitude in the nineteenth century.

Bohemia was not an objective condition, in the sense that one could measure it socially or spatially (demographically or geographically); rather, it was an imaginary community in some respects, one which could find itself a site or area in a city which would attract like-minded spirits. It was a powerful idea and image, one that resonated deeply with the disenfranchised, the bored, the wayward and wandering. It was at once a

form of life and a dramatized interpretation both of itself and of the society to which it was a response. Artists were particularly taken with with it, particularly in light of changes in the nature of artistic production in the nineteenth century. As social roles and expectations were being redefined after the French Revolution, so too were the roles of artists. Previous to the nineteenth century, artists found themselves cared for by the patronage system, where artists were supported by members of the aristocracy or monarchy (previously it was guilds which bound artists to prestigious persons). As the aristocracy's power waned and disappeared in the nineteenth century, artists had to find other means of support in order to survive. Like farmers and other individuals, they found themselves competing for resources (payment) in a commercial market, with their works now part of a world of buying and selling from which they had previously been sheltered. Art as "product" was beginning now in earnest to operate according to the logic of a capitalist regime, entering the market and being treated as another piece of merchandise to be bought and sold.⁹

The world of culture and art was being transformed, and urban growth, alongside increases in literacy, produced new demands for a greater variety of cultural commodities. Artists were ambivalent about their new status in the world of commerce. The market was too narrowly focused on profit and revenue, many of them believed, to accommodate the power of imagination. The reductive side of the market, whereby anything could be bought and sold, was seen by artists as a sign of its impoverished nature—that the crude mechanics of the market were not suited, in any adequate way, to do justice to the more transcendent aspirations to the beautiful and the sublime which artists saw themselves pursuing. As Wilson notes, the artist often raised him or herself

above crass commercialism, “transformed into a symbolic figure, who carried the weight of ideological meaning” (Wilson ,18). The artist-as-outsider, as bearer or arbiter of some residual sense of authenticity now lost in an indifferent market economy, was being realized. The artist in this context could be seen as living the contradictions of capitalism. The market debased art, and by participating in it, by having to eke out an existence, the artist was at once capitulating to the logic of capital, but also giving up the leisure time required to stimulate an active artistic imagination. This would become a standard bohemian trope: across the ocean, in New York at the turn of the last century, these same sentiments were being expressed by a “community of dissidents who prided themselves on living a life apart—a modernist secession—even as they shrewdly identified and exploited certain openings in the establishment they denounced” (Stansell, 6).

With the rise of liberal individualism, a development difficult to disentangle from the deep-rooted logic of a new form of capitalism, the decline of the patronage system took on a new significance, as many artists who had been excluded by it now found themselves on equal footing with those who reaped its benefits. A new kind of artistic culture emerged which encouraged all those who could to develop their talents. Only under these modern conditions could the artist seek to realize his (or her) personal vision, no longer subject to the demands of a patron. There were new forms of autonomy that coincided with the rise of market capitalism. The development of the market, in which the middle-class was expanding as was its discretionary income, enabled a different kind of art world to appear, finding a foothold in a new society with expanding tastes and interests now freed from the earlier restrictive and repressive forms of social life. Cesar

Graña has neatly summed up these developments in nineteenth-century French literature (but the same can be said about the arts generally at the time):

The social and intellectual conditions of French literature in the nineteenth century appear as follows: a “sponsor” class no longer existed, writers no longer played their part on a stage of cultural continuity and, as in the case of compelling ideologies and economic interests, literature had become subject to the modern marketplace.

(Graña, 1964: 87)

Given these circumstances, bohemia for many artists acquired some of its glamour though a sense of resistance to change and to the bourgeoisie, standing for a kind of moratorium on the demands of social maturation, as an aesthetic and existential posture marked both by idealism and indulgence (Seigel, 56).

A much more rigorous sociological account of bohemia has been offered by Pierre Bourdieu. In The Rules of Art (1992), he addresses the notion of bohemia explicitly, considering in detail how a literary field is constructed, how artistic value is established and how the cultural and social space that results defines itself in relation to a dominant field of cultural production. As Bourdieu makes clear, since the disappearance of the patronage system and a system of cultural production which was indebted to an aristocratic society, artists have had to contend with “structural subordination” which positions them unequally within the field of cultural production. There are two “principle mediations” determining positionality: the market (which forms the commercial context informing critical judgments about “industrialized literature”); and “durable links,” by which he means “affinities of lifestyle and value systems, and operating especially through the intermediary of the salons, which unite at least a certain portion of the writers to certain sections of society...” (Bourdieu, 49). He notes that the various apparatuses

which are privileged enough to confer value on certain texts favour the novel over poetry (the latter being seen as the domain of the bohemians). It is primarily in the space of the salon where symbolic struggles over the value of certain kinds of literature are played out. Here, he suggests, salons “distinguish themselves more by whom they exclude than by whom they include,” thereby helping to determine the structure of the literary field. We are not far from the art world of Danto and Dickie here, at least in its quest for autonomy; Bourdieu is more concerned, however, with how struggles over value need to be contextualized socially.

Bourdieu’s contribution to the sociology of cultural production is evident in his overview of the structuring principles of bohemia, a social space which he suggests is concerned primarily with cultivating an “art of living” (54). This type of living necessarily implies having at one’s disposal the density and diversity of resources, both symbolic and material, which can be found only in cities. Bohemia was a new phenomenon which could only flourish in the new modern city, where mass production, mass consumption, mass spectacle and mass migration to the city resulted in the expansion of a market for a variety of cultural goods:

(C)ity life offered practical advantages to the bohemian. It provided an escape from the responsibilities of the family, and made possible the formation of new groups and friendships based on interest and work rather than on kinship. The streets, bars, hidden corners provided a revolutionary source of material. More important still were its symbolic and aesthetic aspects. The bohemians modernized the aesthetic of Romanticism by applying it to urban life. Where romantic artists had invested past time and wild or distant places with glamour and meaning, the bohemians saw as wild and strange a beauty in the sublime desolation and ugliness of the industrial city.

(Wilson, 28)

Certainly, historical specificities determine how bohemia and its affective alliances would take shape in Paris. At this particular historical moment, there are three significant factors which determine the availability of dominant cultural (and social) positions and the increasing demand for them (in turn highlighting Paris's role in a flourishing bohemia): a youthful administrative class which has restricted access to members of its own class; the centralization of those with diplomas in Paris (an expanding job market); and finally, the "exclusivity of the bourgeoisie" (54). This structural and social exclusion for a vast number of people who had university degrees created an educated underclass had then to seek employment in less "noble" professions. Generally, this meant a move towards the literary field, where "scholarship" was not necessarily the privileged term of access. The result is the development of an alternative social and cultural space:

With the assemblage of a very numerous population of young people aspiring to live by art, and separated from other social categories by the art of living they are in the course of inventing, a genuine society within society makes its appearance.

(Bourdieu: 55)

This society, which is beginning to define and actively produce a more clearly delineated social and cultural space for itself, is for Bourdieu is made up of a "proletaroid intelligentsia" (55). The evolution of bohemia, as an idea expressed in literature and as a concrete inscription and deliberate projection onto urban space, nourishes a range of activities which slowly accumulate form something resembling a discernible lifestyle. "The assurance of being collectively keepers of excellence with respect to lifestyle is expressed everywhere" (56). This notion of lifestyle is something which only the city seems best suited to supply, as a space which contains the material resources (however

meager) and the symbolic resources (underpinned by an increasingly industrialized literary culture):

The bohemian lifestyle, which no doubt made an important contribution (with fantasy, puns, jokes, songs, drink and love in all forms) to the invention of the artistic lifestyle, was elaborated as much against dutiful existence of official painters and sculptors as against the routines of bourgeois life. Making the art of living one of the fine arts means predisposing it to enter into literature; but the invention of literary personage of bohemia is not simply a fact of literature: from Murger and Champfleury to Balzac and to the Flaubert of the *Sentimental Education*, novelists contribute greatly to public recognition of this new social entity—especially by inventing and spreading the very notion of bohemia—and to the construction of its identity, values, norms and myths.

(Bourdieu, 56)

Myths here serve as the connective tissue of bohemia, but also adumbrate the imaginary horizons of this emergent cultural space. In fact, the role of mythology in the service of bohemia should not be understated, as certain narratives begin to form which are then extrapolated into lines of continuity (through song, stories, personal accounts, a literature devoted to the celebration of bohemia) and which connect a range of different practices and sites to one another in a geographically-dispersed affective alliance. Mythology is crucial to the symbolic infrastructure which functions at one level to ensure the durability of the bohemian spaces in geographically and temporally disparate sites (see Chapter Five for more discussion of the role of mythology in shaping the social and semiotic shape of bohemia).

The bohemian spaces which take on more definite shape in the nineteenth century are characterized, as Seigel and Wilson both noted, by ambiguities and ambivalences. Bourdieu also describes the ambiguous nature of bohemia, situating it within a broader social field:

An ambiguous reality, bohemia inspires ambivalent feelings, even among its most passionate defenders. In the first place, this is because it defies classification: near to the 'people,' with whom it often shares misery, it is separated from them by art of living that defines it socially and which, even if ostentatiously opposed to the conventions and proprieties of the bourgeoisie, is situated nearer the aristocracy or the grande bourgeoisie than to the orderly petite-bourgeoisie, notably in the matter of relations between the sexes, where it experiments on a large scale with all forms of transgression (free love, venal love, pure love, eroticism) which it institutes as models in its writings.... But adding to its ambiguity, bohemia does not stop changing in the course of time, as it grows numerically and as its prestige (or mirages) attracts destitute young people, often of provincial and working-class origin, who around 1848 dominate the 'second bohemia.' In contrast to the romantic dandy of the 'golden bohemia' of the rue de Doyenne, the bohemia of Murger, Champfleury or Duranty constitutes a veritable intellectual reserve army, directly subject to the laws of the market and often obliged to live off a second skill... in order to live an art that cannot make a living.

(56-57)

The notion of ambiguity resounds throughout the literature on bohemia. Wilson notes its role in the creation of a paradox for the artist, where success for the artist was actually a sign of failure (18). In what Bourdieu labels an "economic world reversed," the terms of success and failure are inverted such that economic success is a sign of giving in, of "selling-out." What Bourdieu is describing throughout this picture of nineteenth-century French bohemia is the creation of an autonomous world, independent in spirit (but not entirely in practice) from the bourgeois or dominant culture:

(T)he society of artists is not merely a laboratory where this singular art of living that is they style of an artists life is being invented as a fundamental dimension of the enterprise of artistic creation. One of its major functions...is to be its own market.

(58)

The creation of this market creates a social space which defines itself in negative relation to the dominant market. There are objective and subjective consequences to this, both of

which serve to maintain the distinction between the dominant and subordinate relationship of these two markets:

But it is no less certain that indignation, revolt and contempt remain negative principles, contingent and conjunctural, too directly dependent on the particular dispositions and virtues of individuals and no doubt too easily reversed or overturned, and that the reactional independence which they arouse remains too vulnerable to enterprises of seduction or annexation by the powerful. Practices which are regularly and durably emancipated from constraints and from direct or indirect pressures from temporal powers are not possible unless they can find their principle not in the fluctuating inclinations of moods or the voluntarist revolutions of morality, but in the very necessity of a social universe which has as a fundamental law, as a *nomos*, independence with respect to economic and political power; unless, to put it another way, the specific *nomos* which constitutes the literary or artistic order as such finds itself instituted both in the objective structures of a socially governed universe and in the mental structures of those who inhabit it and who tend by this fact to accept as evident the injunctions inscribed in the immanent logic of its functioning.

(61)

What makes Bourdieu's description of cultural production in bohemia much more compelling than the one associated with "art world" is the former's pronounced emphasis on structured sociality. There are lines of demarcation which are always being drawn and re-drawn, tighter and looser clusters made up of distinct and overlapping networks of exclusion and inclusion. The elasticity of bohemia is rooted in a strategy notable for its magical solution to the problem of the market: "The symbolic revolution through which artists free themselves from bourgeois demand by refusing to recognize any master except their art produces the effect of making the market disappear" (Bourdieu, 81). In this sleight of hand, we are left with a compelling portrait of world of cultural production which is fraught by the struggle for legitimacy, all of which has some spatial consequence, not least in the sense that legitimate sites of cultural production are being

redefined. Urban spaces are being poetically (in its etymological sense at the very least) reconfigured as having a hitherto unexplored and unexploited practical utility, and are thereby resemanticized, given new meaning and gaining new sets of associations and rendered as sites of creative possibility.

Subcultures

Subcultures represent noise (as opposed to sound): interference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media. We should therefore not underestimate the signifying power of the spectacular subculture not only as a metaphor for potential anarchy 'out there' but as an actual mechanism of semantic disorder: a kind of temporary blockage in the system of representation.

(Dick Hebdige)¹⁰

If by the late 1950s and early 60s, the term bohemia had lost its semiotic edge, (now used as a disparaging or dismissive remark about "outsiders" and "hipsters"), a new term, with more sociological definition, was in ascendance. "Subculture" as a sociological category has enjoyed a longstanding currency among scholars seeking to understand the social mechanics of those groups who have "opted-out" of mainstream society. Initially appearing in the 1940s, "subculture" by the late seventies had surrounding it a significant body of work which sought to frame certain acts of cultural production. In its recent emphasis on youth, subcultural theory shares a sociological affinity with aspects of bohemia.¹¹ As Bourdieu sees it, a bohemian may well be defined as one "who prolongs adolescent revolt beyond a socially assigned limit" (Bourdieu, 64). Below is a brief overview of subcultural theory, followed by some criticisms which question some its theoretical currency. As the one term dealt with thus far that has the most sociological definition, "subculture" is often chosen as the preferred model by

which to analyze musicmaking, and it is to this description which this discussion now turns.

The ongoing use of subcultural theory to describe musicmaking is clearly indebted to the work of Hebdige and his study of punk. Subcultures as “noise,” as Hebdige puts it, is a metaphor that possesses a deep, romantic and poetic resonance for many scholars. The heroic rhetoric of resistance, the valorization of the underdog and outsider, and the reemergence of a potentially political working-class consciousness are all embedded in discourses that have shaped the theorization of subcultures over the past twenty-five years. The work of Hebdige, Stuart Hall and others connected with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), University of Birmingham, through which these conceits evolved, remain a backdrop for many contemporary theories of subcultures. Studies such as Subcultures: The Meaning of Style (Hebdige, 1979) and Resistance Through Rituals (Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, et al, 1976) drew their theory from such diverse sources as Gramsci’s theories of hegemony, Levi-Strauss’s notion of bricolage and homology, Eco’s semiotics and Marx’s theories of class, ideology and commodity fetishism. The sartorial splendor of Teds, Mods, Rockers and Punks became emblematic of a “semiotic guerrilla warfare” that took objects from the dominant culture and transformed their everyday naturalized meaning into something spectacular and alien. Style became a form of resistance.

It is perhaps unfortunate that this discourse of style has outlasted many other aspects of their work. The emphasis on style often obscures more important practices, diminishing the value of related subcultural practices which are not as visible, less tied to the performative dimensions of subcultural practice. How and where subcultures come

together, for instance, was of less concern to many people studying subcultures. It is somewhat unfortunate then that the theory has been recently recuperated in an attempt to situate subcultural practices within a postmodern milieu. In this context, Baudrillard's implosion of meaning, the blurring of fantasy and reality through the aestheticization of everyday life and the supremacy of the image in a visually-biased culture become tropes that consign subcultural practices to a narrow notion of spectacle. Social and cultural practices, condensed to mere processes of signification, are consequently viewed through theoretical lenses inadequately predisposed to consider the complex intersection and layering of institutional, industrial, material, social, spatial and temporal dimensions and relations that facilitate and circumscribe a given social formation's spatial organization and functionality

The discussion that follows questions the efficacy of subcultural theory as it has been understood since the work of scholars at the CCCS rejuvenated an interest in the field. To illuminate the blind spots of subcultural theory, the spaces, and specifically the translocal contexts and local circumstances in which certain cultural practices unfold, a thicker description of the multiple forces and vectors that shape them is required. The (retreat to the) spectacularization of subcultures offers ineffective descriptive tools and often obscures the complexity of current cultural practices that constitute, and are constituted by, increasingly translocalized and globalized cultural economies. As a corrective, the notion of space, an aspect of their work that has been only tentatively reclaimed in recent work, will be addressed in more detail.

The exploration of certain cultural sensibilities and their coalescence into what will be loosely referred to here as taste cultures (Gans,), requires a conceptual framework

that is also amenable to describing reconfigurations of spatiality and their effect on social relations. “Tastes” are to be defined, after David Chaney, as a “social vocabulary, a symbolic repertoire of membership and reference affiliations as a discourse that can be endlessly modified and renewed in the imagery and narratives of mass culture” (Chaney, 1997:149). Tastes, alongside dispositions, preferences and affinities, all systems of classification and organization, are terms meant to denote social activities and attitudes that influence as much as they are influenced by the spaces where they reside (Bourdieu, 1984). They suggest a rhetorical move away from rigidly vertical models that rely upon universals such as class and enable a nuanced examination of individual identity and group dynamics and how they are articulated (often unevenly) to larger scale cultural arenas.

The subcultural theory put forward by John Clarke, Phil Cohen, Hebdige and Hall found its theoretical antecedents in a century of sociological work on deviancy and delinquency. A somewhat uneven trajectory can be traced from the work of Emile Durkheim to his influence on the Chicago School, a connection that shaped a tradition uniting urban studies and sociology, one with a profound and prolonged effect on successive studies of marginal(ised) social groups. That history needs little elaboration here as it has been thoroughly discussed in a number of texts devoted to a survey of the field (Sumner, 1994; Taylor, Watson and Young, 1974; Brake, 1984). Briefly, the work of Hall, Clarke, Hebdige, Cohen and others remains embedded in a tradition that includes functionalist anomie theory and the work of the Chicago School. Phil Cohen’s work on neighborhoods, for instance, shares much with Robert Park’s social ecology; Clarke and Hall’s introductory essay in Resistance Through Rituals echoes Robert Merton’s anomie

theory. The new theory shares an intellectual affinity with the works its authors were initially trying to dispense with. Working class adolescent males remain the central focus in most cases and delinquency still remains the collective solution to a fundamental structural problem. The new theories, however, offer a much more intricate analysis, as Stanley Cohen has suggested, with the addition of a more rigorous structural analysis (Cohen, 1972). In this revamped model, class, race and gender, understood historically, economically and politically are the “problem” to which subcultures are the “solution.”

Phil Cohen’s landmark project, “Subcultural Conflict and Working-Class Community,” exemplifies the approach taken by many of the CCCS theorists. It foreshadows their focus on post-World War II social transformations as wrought by a reinvigorated industrialism, renewed urbanization (as well as the “explosion” of suburban development) and the accelerated consuming habits of the young (Cohen, 1972). Taking the members of the working-class of East End London as his object of study, Cohen proposed that their position in newly urbanized spaces had become one of exclusion. In these renovated spaces the working-class was subjected to middle-class ideology with its valorization of property and individual ownership, a stark contrast to the working-class ideal of communal ownership. The fractures that ran through the East End section under scrutiny were economic, ideological and political, all of which combined to a greater degree among the working class youth. The generational conflict that results gives rise to new subcultures that thrive in opposition to the parent culture. Consequently, Cohen notes, “one effect of this was to weaken the links of historical and cultural continuity, mediated through the family” (Cohen, 94). Face-to-face contact with family members becomes abstracted to symbolic relations that are mediated through the activities of other

members of a subculture. The subculture, a symbolic structure, then tries to “magically” resolve the contradictions that exist (latent or manifest) in the parent culture. (The subculture, although a symbolic structure, depends upon territoriality to anchor individual members to a collective reality.) The contradictions of the parent culture remain irresolvable because “it merely transcribes its terms at a micro social level and inscribes them in an imaginary set of relations” (Cohen: 96). This is not meant to suggest the futility of subcultural activity, however. Even as it expresses its autonomy from the parent culture, it simultaneously maintains parental identification, which often manifests itself through a ritualized defense against the transition into adulthood.

John Clarke, Stuart Hall, et al., also view youth subcultures through the prism of class and suggest they are doubly articulated to a parent culture (the working-class) and the dominant culture. Subcultures are defined here as “smaller, more localized and differentiated structures, within one or more of the larger cultural networks” (Hall, et al: 13). There is a distinction to be drawn, however, between subcultures and other resistant or alternative cultures: working class cultures are the home of subcultures, while middle-class cultures create counter-cultures. This class-based correlation can be made because subcultures must be understood, foremost, in relation to the hegemonic forces of the dominant culture. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony illuminates how a fraction of working-class culture, youth, comes to have its expressive elements curtailed and its lived reality circumscribed by the operation of hegemony. Society can never be one-dimensional and as such the working class is never completely absorbed by the dominant class. The occupation of these lacunae is understood as “winning space,” a negotiated version of the dominant culture’s values that the working-class has appropriated as an alternate moral

system permitting legitimization of their means of expression. This space was won by being made, a creative response to their alienation and disenfranchisement.

The authors extend Cohen's work on symbolic structures, particularly modes such as dress, music, ritual and argot. The resulting discourses of style are an attempt to examine the relations struck between the subculture, the parent culture and mass culture. Through the semiotic reconfiguration of objects, specifically the commodities of the dominant class, the members of a given subculture invest them with particular meanings, further strengthening its inner relations through arcane symbolic gestures. The unity of the modes binds the expressive elements of the subculture together, crystallizing into a set of rarefied cultural practices that develop their own history and structure, ones that are detached from the symbolic and social firmament of the dominant culture.

Class, at least for Dick Hebdige in his study of British punks in Subculture: The Meaning of Style, is only one dimension of subcultural formation. Hebdige's work occupies a central place in the subcultural *oeuvre*, offering a persuasive integration of modernist literature, semiotics, anthropology and structuralism in what has become a canonical study of the emergence of punk style. Hebdige's examination of punk music and culture historicizes its antecedents (reggae, the Teds, Mods, rockers) in a highly charged class-stratified milieu (where the even the working class is fraught with racially motivated anxiety and blame-casting). Hebdige offers an examination of the process of cross-pollination, hybridization, contamination and appropriation that occurred among subcultures in post-war Britain.

In this context, subcultural style, a deliberately arranged sartorial semiotic guerrilla warfare, is crucial to making the "noise" essential to the success of a given

subculture. Through processes of incorporation and excorporation, style for the dominant culture becomes both a celebration and subject of derision in the media; for subcultures it becomes a form of lived contestation and innovation. Hebdige recalls Stanley Cohen's "folk devil" and "moral panic" to suggest how the subordinate group is constituted in the social imaginary of the dominant group. The process of recuperation (of neutralizing the threat posed by "folk devils") used by the dominant culture takes two forms: conversion of subcultural signs into commodities and the relabeling of deviant behavior by various social agencies (police, judiciary), providing the means through which the dominant ideology is articulated and maintained (through surveillance, discipline and punishment). Much like bohemians anticipate processes of gentrification, subcultural threats are neutralized in a variety of ways. The supposed Otherness of punks, as Hebdige notes, is continually redefined in the media, recuperated most often through the discourse of the family.

How they come to resist this process is understood by Hebdige as taking shape through a variety of practices, most of which recall the earlier formulation of ritual, argot, music, and dress. The subculture defines itself through a number of stylistic forms: intentional communication, bricolage, homology and signifying practice. Intentional communication is an ironic gesture, where visual ensembles are understood, at least by members of the subculture, as fabricated and function as forms of display. *Bricolage*, a term borrowed from Levi-Strauss to describe a science of the concrete (of the everyday), is a descriptive tool employed to account for the reconfiguration the naturalized meaning of an object. Elevated through the rhetoric of style, the *détournement* of objects takes on

another layer of cultural value, acquiring a new symbolic resonance and meaning subject to the discourses and visual idioms specific to the subculture.

Hebdige also borrows from Levi-Strauss the notion of homology to explain the connection between seemingly disparate cultural practices. Homology is understood as the “symbolic fit” between a subculture and the lifestyles and attitudes its members act out. There was an order to the chaos in punk subculture that, to the initiated, made it appear as a coherent and meaningful whole. There was an internal structure and an organic fit between various parts, which to the uninitiated appeared as disparate and non-sensical. The objects that circulated through that culture acquired a resonance that has deep affective value, suitably arrayed in the subcultural imaginary as a reflection and expression of explicit and implicit values. An extension of bricolage, homology is a term deployed to explain the consistency of a subculture and its members’ attachment to various material practices (record collecting, clothes wearing, scooter buying).

Bricolage and homology are both terms that describe a set of signifying practices. However, subcultures embody a number of contradictions which most semiotic theory is inadequately disposed to accommodate. Hebdige stresses instead the polysemy of signifying practices, in which structure and system are discarded for the more febrile idea of subject position and the process of meaning making (which is ultimately bound up in the dominance of the signifier over the signified). He borrows from Julie Kristeva the notion of radical signifying practices: those which disturb rationality and order and semantic coherence. Punk for instance “cohered elliptically through a chain of conspicuous absences. It was characterized by its unlocatedness -- its blankness” (Hebdige: 120)

Members of a subculture are not always fully aware of the significance (in semiotic terms at least) of their own practices. The level of commitment to a subculture differs for many individuals. It can be either escape or distraction, but there must be a common language, or “it must say the right things in the right way at the right time” (ibid: 122). Using Kristeva’s concept of poetic language to describe a form of disturbed syntax, Hebdige proposes that punk expresses itself through semantic rupture. Punk’s refashioning of language is positioned in contrast to other subcultures that might be seen as simply and ‘magically’ resolving the contradictions of living under the regimes of industrialized capitalism. From swastikas as accessories, to safety pins puncturing cheeks, to wearing bin liners as clothes, punks were construed as literally inscribing and embodying those contradictions.

There is a great deal of theoretical value found in the work of the work of the CCCS, as it opened up an analytical framework which enabled a richer study of peripheral social formations and their cultural practices, and attempted to spatialize a descriptive category which had only tentatively dealt with space. Their examinations of the power differentials that structure contemporary culture created analytical tools that remain critical to any attempt accounting for the myriad responses of subordinate(d) groups to structures of domination. However, there remain a number of areas that are overtheorized, and others undertheorized, which may in turn lead questions about the continued relevance of their work. First, the discourse of style overemphasizes symbolic response to exclusion, situating semiotic play with appropriated texts above that of the imaginative and concrete contexts in which cultural activity takes place. Also, the discourse of style adopted by a number of CCCS theorists remains fettered to its overly

reductive optimism. Style is either a symbolic form of resistance or a ‘magical solution’ and therefore not a ‘real’ solution. The discourses attached to ‘winning space’ and the symbolic nature of that process in the CCCS’s analyses are rhetorical ploys meant to explain away the opacity of subcultural activity itself. Style should be understood neither as a decoding/encoding tool that is solely oppositional, nor as something internal to the group itself. The convergence of mass culture and subculture through the *détournement* of appropriated objects is much more nuanced: it is trickle-up as much as trickle-down. The second criticism, and related to the first, is that the creation of a subcultural “Other” such as the media, the mainstream or the popular elides the role each plays in the subculture’s own internal construction (a similar argument made about the nature of bohemia, as Bourdieu, Wilson and Seigel suggest). Third, the emphasis on a linear model such as class acting as the sole determinant in the origins of subcultural practices marginalizes other factors such as age, gender and ethnicity, and consigns consideration of those factors to outside the purview of a model bound to a geographically specific notion of territory and “winning space.” The first criticism has been (somewhat awkwardly) rethought in the context of postmodernism; the latter criticisms have been highlighted by the effects of an increasingly globalized cultural economy. This is due primarily to the shifting parameters circumscribing the spaces in which cultural practices are realized (the tension between local circumstances and translocal contexts, or more specifically, between the dispersed and geographically disconnected sites of production and consumption); secondly by the movement and mobility of ideas, objects, people and texts through that globalized cultural economy and its apparatuses, undermining the

notion of a single trajectory or determinant shaping individual identity and group affiliation.

In the first case, attempts to reposition cultural studies alongside the vector of postmodernism offer little in the way of improvement. David Muggleton (1997) has extended those previous studies of subcultural practice, repositioning them in a postmodern milieu. Writing on the “post-subculturalist” he places particular emphasis on style and the encroachment of the visual into the everyday. In the aestheticized setting of the quotidian there are no commodities left, just signs, the logical conclusion of a move away from use-value (authentic-modern) to exchange-value (manufactured-modern) and finally to the apotheosis of sign value (postmodern). Subcultural styles become simulacra, copies with no originals (196). Accordingly, there is no longer space for originality, as referents have been displaced or “disappeared” and the “real” reduced to the play of surfaces, an infinite series of signifiers signifying more signifiers. Creative practices such as fashion, art and music become depthless manifestations of postmodern pastiche, where any potentially radical politics (identity, resistance or otherwise) is thus erased. If there is no originality there is no authenticity:

Post-subculturalists no longer have any sense of subcultural authenticity where inception is rooted in particular sociotemporal contexts and tied to underlying structural relations. Indeed post-subculturalists will experience all the signs of the subculture of their choosing time and time again. Choosing is the operative word here, for post-subculturalists revel in the availability of subcultural choice.... This is something that all post-subculturalists are aware of, that there are no rules, that there is no authenticity, no reason for ideological commitment, merely a stylistic game to be played.

(198)

Muggleton's account of current cultural practices focuses on rootlessness and play, where any hope for the ruptures which characterized the CCCS model of subcultural practice is seen as currently impossible. Cut adrift in a free-floating, inauthentic and valueless ether, post-subculturalists are interpreted as mindlessly genuflecting in awe at the postmodern, millennial sublime:

The trappings of spectacular style are their right of admission to a costume party, a masquerade, a hedonistic escape into a Blitz Culture fantasy characterized by political indifference.

(200)

This formulation of postmodernism, framed by a cultural pessimism suggesting quietism, apathy, moral relativism, and the ability to occupy a multiplicity of subjectivities obscures the effect that difference (structural and otherwise) and differential access to power have on producing meaningful contexts (and contexts of meaning) for cultural activity. The gravitation of individuals and groups to sites of emotional investment, whether they be imaginary or real, is rendered meaningless.

Almost as a pre-emptive corrective to this, Grossberg (1984,1994) has more convincingly characterized the postmodern as a disarticulation of affect and ideology, where maps of meaning and mattering maps become disengaged, and reengaged in new places. Affect is a structured plane of effects (investment) which offers the possibility of agency (of acting wilfully) and it describes "observable differences in how practices matter to, or are taken up by, different configurations of popular discourses and practices - different alliances (which are not simply audiences)" (228). Although affect waxes and wanes within everyday contexts, authenticity has not disappeared; it remains crucial to processes of differentiation, but has been modified in ironic fashion:

Confronting the postmodern vector of everyday life produces an increasing tendency to stop in places (e.g. taking on particular cultural identities or taking up forms of agency), while self-consciously questioning, limiting or perhaps even challenging the investment in them: authentic inauthenticity (indifference) is a popular logic which refuses to distinguish between the authentic and inauthentic, between boredom and terror—and a set of practices which celebrates the affectivity of investment while refusing to discriminate between different forms and sites of investment - as the only viable response to contemporary conditions.

(233)

Contrary to Muggleton's model, rules still exist within the spaces of everyday life, albeit in very provisional and ad hoc forms. The unequal exercise of power (and its uneven distribution) in any given context negates claims postmodern theory makes about a cultural levelling where boundaries disappear. Boundaries are continually shifting and being redrawn, the contexts of cultural activity habitually reconstituted by the power relations and lines of continuity (traditions, mythologies, the circulation of people, symbols, and commodities) which cut through them.

Subcultural production produces spaces which are dynamic sites of activity and includes the continual reassertion and maintenance of boundaries enacted through processes of differentiation and distinction made by groups and individuals, all of which need stronger consideration. Grossberg (1984, 1997) and Sarah Thornton (1996) have each challenged the CCCS's assessment of cultural practices unfolding in discrete, self-contained spaces, the former by problematizing the notion of "the mainstream" (in relation to "the postmodern") and the latter by inserting the media into the very origins of subcultures. For Grossberg the "mainstream," or more correctly "the popular," exists as a social pastiche where fragments from the margins are incorporated and fragments of itself are excorporated back into the margins: "a structured distribution of practices, codes and

effects” (220). The intersection and overlap of margin and mainstream creates a space where practices of social and cultural differentiation unfold whereby the mainstream can no longer be seen as unified or monolithically “Other.”

The researchers at the CCCS construed the media as a *post facto* response to subcultures, allowing them to see more “uncontaminated homologies.” They saw the media as instrumental to the success of the dominant hegemony, an integral part of the apparatus (the control culture) which constructed punks as “Other.” Subcultures were consequently theorized as “transparent niches in an opaque world as if subcultural life spoke an unmediated truth” (Thornton: 119). In contrast, Thornton suggests that the media (television, radio, magazines, zines, pamphlets, virtual media such as the Internet) are integral to the formation of subcultures, playing a significant role in both their origin as well as prolonging their lifecycle. The media exist as systems of communication critical to the circulation of ideas, images, sounds and ideologies that bind culture(s) together. Thornton reminds us that some media legitimate while others popularize, some preserve the esoteric while others are seen to sell out: “As subjects of discussion and sources of information, media are deliberate and accidental determinants of cultural hierarchy” (Thornton: 164). The media function in that latter instance as a central network for the movement and distribution through cultural and social hierarchies of what Thornton, borrowing from Bourdieu (1984), has called “subcultural capital.” Various types of capital (cultural, economic, social, symbolic) are acquired and distributed according to a logic specific to the field in which they reside. Economic capital is distributed through the field of economics, educational capital through an educational field. etc. Fields, as defined in the discussion of bohemia above, (of cultural

production, of economics, of education) are hierarchies structuring the social spaces where struggles over capital and various resources are played out. The overarching field, of which these narrower fields are subsets, is the field of power (Bourdieu, 1993). Cultural capital, a form of knowledge acquired through education and upbringing, is dispersed throughout the field of cultural production, where individuals and groups struggle to acquire and reinvest it to maintain social status.

Bourdieu's taxonomy of capital effectively describes the hierarchies of value and social status that underlie the (conscious and unconscious, subjective and objective) construction of individual preferences, tastes, and how they might then be articulated to, and by, social formations:

Taste, the propensity and capacity to appropriate (materially or symbolically) a given class of classified, classifying objects or practices, is the generative formula of life-style, a unitary set of distinctive preferences which express the same expressive intention in the specific logic of each of the symbolic sub-spaces, furniture, clothing, language or body hexis.

(Bourdieu, 1984:173)

The field of cultural production, for example, could not exist if it were not for always already preexisting tastes. It offers a universe of cultural goods, a range of stylistic possibilities from which individuals select the system of stylistic features constituting a lifestyle (230). In contrast, by not considering the origins of style as a preference or predisposition, the CCCS never fully explained how style might become a "uniform," a lifestyle replete with "attitude." For Bourdieu, and Thornton, cultural capital can be embodied/objectified (i.e.: style/lifestyle), the end result being the naturalization of preferences into what might be called second nature, the ability to make the "right" choices, evidence of what Bourdieu calls the habitus:

Habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification of these practices. It is the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-styles, is constituted.

(170)

Bourdieu (1993) states that the field of cultural production is composed of two differing fields: the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale production. The former is germane to this discussion because it describes the “negative existence” of this field in relation to the latter. Externally, the sub-field of restricted production is opposed to the dominant economic order (“the mainstream”). In terms which recall the differentiating mechanisms of the art world, he argues that internally, the sub-field of restricted production is structured by the opposition between what he calls the “consecrated avant-garde” and the “avant-garde”: an opposition between those who have the power to consecrate and those who are trying to acquire that power (i.e. newcomers). The activity within the field of restricted cultural production is more characteristically defined as production for producers. In this context, where market forces are integral to the formation of the field, notions of autonomy become paramount. Authenticity and selling out are terms which are frequently deployed to define and justify who or what might be in or out.

Bourdieu’s notion of fields as “spaces of possibility” emphasizes the contested and conflicted activities of individuals vying for positions and resources in several fields and given sites. In these differing contexts, his notion of accruing and investing various types of capital is most amenable to describing systems of exchange and distribution that

are not reducible to a simple economism. The field of cultural production exists as a field of “possible forces” which organizes and is organized by the agents operating within it:

(And is) defined in the relationship between the structure of average chances of access to different positions (measured by the difficulty of attaining them and, more precisely, by the relationship between the number of positions and the number of competitors) and the dispositions of each agent, the subjective basis of the perception and appreciation of the objective chances.

(64)

Dispositions and positions combine to form a sense of social direction which orient individuals within a given field. This “direction” cannot be understood solely as linear. The work of CCCS, which often correlated a vertical model of class rather mechanically to culture to explain the cultural forms they produce, fails to consider the effects of power differentials which function to quantitatively and qualitatively determine access to a given field (Bourdieu, 1993: 65). Bourdieu’s model of fields, taste and habitus moves beyond a rigidly vertical description of cultural practices by theoretically enumerating the activities occurring within and between fields that are interrelated in more complex, mobile, non-linear and multi-dimensional ways than previously theorized.

In the struggle over symbolic power within a field of cultural production, social space gains more significance (both sociological and semiotic). The value of social space, an aspect of subcultural theory which has only recently been reconsidered, should be stressed here as fundamental to cultural production. Below some of these criticisms will take another form, as subcultural theory is contrasted with recent work on scenes, taking up locality and place-making as notions which should be reconsidered in an attempt to spatialize cultural production. Before turning to this last category, however, it might be best to address certain spatial concerns which have haunted categories such as

art worlds, bohemia and subcultures. The spatial in each of these categories appears as something which is only cursorily attended to, rarely addressed, and often marginalized. What these categories lack is a well-defined sense of the nature of space, spatial production and spatial representation, although each suggests in its own way some sort of spatial dimension to cultural production.

Any analysis of cultural production that extends its purview to consider more informal types of social organization must also ponder those points where certain phenomena overlap, zones within which boundaries between cultural worlds can simultaneously harden and become less rigid, become more porous and more restricted, where distinguishing features become harder to discern but can also be heightened. In this respect, the inclination is to examine precisely these points as a way of getting at new kinds of spatial relationships which might reveal more about the nature of sociality found there. Even a cursory review of the literature devoted to the study of the social relations affiliated with cultural production reveals a profound absence: much of this work rarely addresses the complex relationship that exists between space and cultural practice. Janet Wolff contends that it is a fundamental sociological tenet that all human acts, whether artistic or not, are “socially located.” (1982: 86). Accordingly, they must also have a location, a space or place where they happen. Thus, while a majority of the work devoted to sociology of cultural production is theoretically compelling, it fails to explicitly account for one fundamental dimension of cultural production, namely its spatial expression.

The absence or marginalization of spatiality in descriptions of the social worlds of cultural production introduces another dilemma upon which to reflect, this one

concerned with the more specific space where much of this cultural labour unfolds, the city. How is the city understood by both practitioners and researchers in the study of cultural production? For the practitioner, the city can be seen either as a site rich with creative possibility or as site of struggle over diminishing resources (more will be said about this below). For the researcher looking at the production of culture in the city, there are a number of quandaries which could possibly confront him or her. Many of these might be methodological and others might relate to the difficulty of categorization, or they might partake of both. If, as was suggested above, much of what happens at those points where informal social organizations overlap defies simple definition, how does a researcher undertaking a given project in the city begin to frame that cultural activity in such a way that it gains conceptual and theoretical coherence? Before trying to answer that question, we can follow it with a related one: Why does city space matter in the production of culture? We might situate this question within the so-called “spatial turn” in the humanities, a shift which has prompted a move to place spatial concerns at the centre of a host of cultural analyses. As one of the primary figures guiding much of this discussion, Henri Lefebvre suggests that:

Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. At the same time there is nothing imagined, unreal or ‘ideal’ about it as compared, for example, with science, representations, ideas or dreams. Itself the outcome of past actions, social space is what permits fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others. Among these actions, some serve production, others consumption.
(Lefebvre, 2000: 73)

Space, Lefebvre proclaims, is made up of social relations and relations of production and reproduction. Culture, as bound up in social space according to this definition, is intimately linked to his triad of spatial practices, representations of space, and spatial representations. Spatial practices have to do with physical material flows, and as David Harvey suggests, they are “interactions that occur in and across space in such a way as to assure production and social reproduction.” (Harvey, 1995: 218-219). The second dimension, representations of space, has to do with semiotics, and encompasses all those signifying practices (including codes) that also encourage discussion about material practices. They are “forms of knowledge and hidden ideological content of codes, theories, and the conceptual depictions of space linked to production relations.” (Shields, 1991: 54). This dimension is what allows the experience of place to be communicated, perceived and understood effectively. The final category, spaces of representation, has more to do with a metalanguage of sorts, referring us again to codes, but also “spatial discourses,” imaginary and symbolic landscapes, taking into consideration also symbolic spaces which appear in the built environment, but also museums, in paintings, etc. Lefebvre elaborates:

Though a product to be used, to be consumed, it is also a means of production; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it. Thus this means of production, produced as such, cannot be separated either from the productive forces, including technology and knowledge, or from the social division of labour which shapes it, or from the state and the superstructures of society.

(85)

The complex nature of the production of space introduces provocative issues for those who wish to expand the vocabulary associated with studies of cultural production. The categories one might choose to describe the spatial dimensions of cultural production

are notable as much for their perspicacity as for their limits. Art world, bohemia, subculture and scene are all species of the same sociocultural phenomenon, one which emerges from a spatially-motivated desire to self-consciously make a place in the city for collaborative cultural production. These are terms with quite specific descriptive qualities which suggest that classifying them as related terms is hardly arbitrary: they are social media which are grounded materially and bound together symbolically, nestled within complex sets of spatial relations that are fundamental to their organization and survival; they are cultural spaces linked together by networks, again both material and symbolic, existential and imaginative; and they are also communicative spaces, providing contexts for the development of specific signifying practices which have distinct spatial effects. Discussions of these qualities are often missing when the terms are operationalized. Thus, spatial aspects of cultural production are conspicuously absent from, or obscured within, the existing literature. As a result, many of these studies sidestep some of the main issues raised by others attempting to theorize social space.

What does this mean in terms of the categories described thus far? Each of them attends to space in very different ways. For “art world,” space seems to be an afterthought, or a mere container for cultural production, not something actively produced. In Gendron’s study, for example, while places (“From Montmartre to the Mudd Club”) function for him to link historically distinct cultural practice, and in this confirm the durability of a certain kind of aesthetic tradition, they are mere placeholders, bookends in this particular case, and don’t seem to have much to say in terms of their precise role in the production of musical culture. Broadly described, while “art world” introduces a much needed social dimension to the study of aesthetic value, there is a

sense that much of this evaluative work takes place in a social vacuum, a void. Notably, the importance of social relations, modes of cultural production, the networks they establish and maintain, the patterns of circulation, the relationship between production, distribution and consumption, all imply some set of spatial relations which are conspicuously absent in the use made of “art world.” And while these descriptions of art worlds make otherwise make compelling cases for the relationship between context (material and discursive) and text, and are focused at times on social relations, they fail to address the spatial dimensions of cultural production, neglecting to consider them as facets that shape the production, distribution and reception of art. Where and how art is produced are not separate moments in its production; rather, they are clearly intertwined and mutually reinforcing features that need to be addressed at some theoretical level. Otherwise, descriptions of this kind of cultural production risk abstracting art from its social context and the relevance and applicability of a category like “art world” begins to whither significantly.

By contrast, bohemia refers explicitly to social space. However, while Bourdieu’s in-depth consideration of bohemia is one of the more fruitful attempts to locate cultural production within a conflicted social space, the term “bohemia” might gain more purchase if its less-sociological connotations are also considered. It can also be considered a term that points to a quality of social and cultural life in cities, where its “communal ambience,” in Michel Maffesoli’s poetic turn-of-phrase, contributes to the semiotic impressions of urban vitality. We can find in the genealogy of the term “bohemia” substantial evidence of Maffesoli’s *puissance*, “a will to live,” an engaged and engaging level of sociality, which seems distinctly urban in orientation, motivation and

connotation. This is a social world which provides ample evidence of a “black market sociality” (Maffesoli, 1996: 23). Conceptually, “bohemia” has sociological and semiotic features which allow for a more thorough consideration of the practices, spatial representation and representations of space which go into the social production of what are distinctly modern cultural spaces. (We shall see in the following chapters that the “bohemian barometer” is clearly an indicator of the quality of social life found in a city).

Subcultural theory also addresses the issue of space, albeit in a manner which has only recently been revisited. Some of the problems of subcultural theory and its conceptualization of space can be better situated in relation to the notion of “scene.” Scene, as the discussion below makes clear, is a term which deals explicitly with space and as such provides more flexible framework within which an in-depth consideration of musicmaking and the social production of space can be effectively described. The privileging of scene is not meant to discount the value of art world, bohemia or subculture. The usefulness of scenes resides in its ability to offer a more nuanced account of those kinds of informal social organizations which coalesce around certain forms of urban cultural production such as musicmaking.

Scene

Pop was not an isolated art. It came with an entire Pop scene in which everything was Pop. In other words, what happened is that it was truly an expression of its moment; the clothes, people, vinyl, movies, fads...it was so new that it took our breath away. The high luster of it was the way we were living; the parties we were giving, the good times, the Pop scene, the whole crack out of breaking the old mores, traditions; and living was swinging; and it was exemplified by the fact that an artist can do it on canvas or do it with his work. There were no more restrictions. Everything is

possible. Everything was possible. And that's what we learned from Pop.

(Robert Scull, 1972)

Everyone who is lonely
I've got a place for you
Where the music play-ay-ay-ay-ays
Till way past two

Come along now, let's go down to the scene
(Well, what's it like now)
Meet me down at the scene
(Well, tell me more, tell me more)
You'll live just like a queen
When you're down at the scene

(Dave Clarke Five, "At the Scene")

In the field of popular music studies, analyses of the social dimensions of musicmaking have led to a number of valuable discussions about the kinds of descriptive categories which might best account for sociomusical experiences. Recently, one particular debate has emerged which centers on the sociological value and usefulness of the terms subcultures and scenes. Scholars working in the field have confirmed an indebtedness to the theoretical legacy of the subcultural models set out by, among others, Hebdige and Hall, et al. As we have seen, there have also been a number of attempts to refashion this model (Thornton, 1996; Muggleton, 2000; Bennett, 2000), a departure to which this discussion itself belongs. One particular aspect of subcultural theory, namely the creative response to exclusion and marginalization as "making" or "winning space," has been revisited in recent literature focused on musicmaking. There are various reasons as to why this might be, but two related developments stand out here: the emergence of place studies and a renewed emphasis on the conceptualization of urban space. In the case of place studies, this shift has in many ways to do with the stress placed on locality,

or “the local,” taking up issues that relate to civic politics, cultural policy, or the microeconomics associated with regional cultural production (Gay, 1995; Street, 1995; Mitchell, 1998). This development complements the second trend prevalent in studies of musicmaking, one that tends toward Lefebvre-inspired discussions of urban space, social relations, spatial representations, and spatial practices, noting how these might then bear upon cultural practice in the city (and vice versa).

Cultural geographers, sociologists, social anthropologists and others have taken up both of these trends in analyzing musical cultures (Cohen, 1991, 1998; Finnegan, 1989; Olson, 1998; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Straw, 1991, 2001). As a result, this so-called “spatial turn” has meant that a different interpretative schema for the study of musical practice has come to the fore, one that revolves around the more theoretically compelling notion of scene. Will Straw notes that the spatial turn, as it has influenced a number of disciplines, has lately been given more credence in the field of popular music studies, being used to expand certain descriptive categories which otherwise seem inadequate in accounting for the social dimensions of urban musicmaking (Straw, 2001). He states that previously “the move to investigate space seemed to unfold under the influence of Foucault or Lefebvre, whose claims about space as produced seemed to authorize the analysis of circumscribed sites with clear significance in the delineation of power” (253). Now, he suggests, Simmel and Benjamin are in ascension (*ibid.*). For popular music scholars interested in getting at the social aspects of musicmaking, the result has been that at the same time the notion of subculture was being reinvigorated or refashioned it was also being eclipsed by the ubiquity of scene.

Scene has been taken by some scholars as a category which more accurately describes the sociospatial dimensions of contemporary musical activity, over that of previous categories. One such category which has dominated the field of popular music studies has been that of subcultures, where an emphasis is placed on style as a form of semantic disorder and reordering (Hebdige, 1978), and resistance as a dramatic means of mapping out social difference (Hall, et al., 1976). Subcultural theory has recently been the subject of renewed debate and discussion wherein it has become clear that an emphasis on the spectacular nature of subcultures obscures, rather than illuminates, the complexity of current cultural practices, particularly if they are seen as constituent elements of an increasingly translocal or global cultural economy (Muggleton and Wienzierl, 2003; Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2003). To put this another way: in a cultural arena mediated, as well as motivated, by the accelerated and uneven flow of people, money, ideas, images and cultural commodities, what has become of the relationship between the material and symbolic dimensions of musical worlds and does the term subculture fully capture their many intertwining facets? Subcultural theory, as laid out by the Birmingham school, loses much of its probative value when considering these aspects of the sociomusical experience.

The tenacious appeal of subcultural theory lies in the fact that it is a model which attempts to account for power, ideology and inequality as they are manifested in class-refracted social settings, with a particular emphasis placed on identity and group formation as one form of resolution. Scene, in comparison, might be seen as more strategically vague as to how power manifests itself socially. If it suggests anything, it would be that power differentials are much more diffuse, no longer simply residing in

class hierarchies, that they are social as well as geographic, where this scalar aspect means that they are played out on the levels of neighbourhood, city, region, state, etc. As such, power is located not in easily identifiable sites or social relations, but rather nestled in broader networks of affiliation and dispersed across disparate fields of action. This means that different interpretive tools are called for in order to account for the many circuits, networks, contexts and points of contact that determine the sociomusical experience. The notion of scene might be more readily mobilized to incorporate these elements, allowing an expanded consideration of the industrial, institutional, historical, social, economic contexts alongside the ideological and aesthetic strategies informing musicmaking. Scene's elasticity enables a more nuanced analysis of the dense interconnectedness of musical practice in a manner the more rigid term subculture doesn't quite allow.

Scene has a semantic latitude that allows it to be put to other uses as well. For instance, at a semiotic level, certain other questions emerge when considering the theoretical efficacy of the term subcultures, many of which become much more insistent when grounded in the kind of urban context "scene" necessarily implies. In thinking about the pluralistic nature of cultural life in a cosmopolitan city, for instance, how do we begin to explain the significance of what we might call, for lack of a better term, not-so-spectacular subcultures? It is easy on the one hand to single out punks or Goths, as they wear their difference in the form of "semiotic guerilla warfare," the ostentatious display of which is taken as the standard hallmark of subcultural style; they are so much semantic disorder or "noise" in the system, as Hebdige has said. What, on the other hand, can we make of those less-visible, more modest, subcultures that are just as insistent and

industrious in mapping out their differences, albeit on a less apparent and audible plane? How do we begin to discern or distinguish between those many elements that make up the background, the *white*, noise of the city? How do we account, in both a semiotic and sociological sense, for their significance? By not addressing these sorts of questions, accounts that read subcultural practice as a kind of urban costume drama, while rich, risk mapping out a social semiotic and typology as only so many surface effects. They tend to reduce subcultural studies to a taxonomy of stylistic gestures and mannerisms abstracted from the materiality of the urban contexts and economies which both shape and are shaped by them. In all of this, subcultural theory has a tendency to bracket out certain elements in order to distill the homologies that are then taken to be unifying elements (Thornton, 1995).

Scene, understood here as a specific kind of urban cultural context and practice of spatial coding, has become a salient descriptive category, one which, for the purposes of this discussion at least, has more explanatory power. (Blum suggests that they are “charismatic spaces” (Blum, 2001: 26)). The different sociospatial connotations of scene—its suggestion of flexibility and transience, of temporary, *ad hoc* and strategic associations, the allusion to the paradoxical structure of a world notable as much for its restricted as well as its porous sociality, connotations of flux and flow, movement and mobility—indicate that the significance of musical life should be seen as occurring within a complex intersection of spatial relations and social praxis; in other words, a diversity of conditions which might then be examined according to the terms of a cultural economy constituted and inflected as much by local circumstance as it is by translocal demands and desires. Scene used as an interpretive tool can more effectively outline the diversity

and overlap of urban cultural spaces, allowing analysis of the interlocking nature of city's cultural worlds, replacing the standard subcultural model with its stress on homology and homogeneity. Taken in its broadest sense, scene can also include institutional contexts and industrial affiliations which, depending on the nature of the industry or institution, can then assist in outlining the social mechanics associated with musicmaking, allowing for a fuller account of the dynamic range of forces—social, economic, institutional—affecting the kind and degree of collective expression found in the city.

This is not to ascribe too much explanatory power to the notion of scene, which according to these terms might otherwise be taken as all encompassing (and thus theoretically meaningless). However, what Alan Blum has called the “fundamental ambiguity” of the term “scene,” can be made to give way to more pertinent insights (Blum, 26). We might, for instance, consider two salient aspects of “scene”: at a semiotic level, an emphasis on scene over subculture would not do away with style necessarily, but reposition it within a more complex set of shifting and mobile practices which could then be considered in relation to specifically urban sensibilities, as something more akin to lifestyles (see Chaney, 1995); and, in terms of the symbolic and material infrastructures in the city, the broader scope of the term scene would more effectively incorporate modes of subcultural production, aesthetic strategies, kinds and degrees of sociability, affective states as well as ideologies. In this way, an emphasis on the multivalent character of local scenes/cultural spaces—framed as arenas energized by various forms of competition, negotiation and accommodation taking place on multiple planes—would complicate any notion of a single determinant (such as class, gender, race, etc.) acting as the overarching structuring or organizing principle of cultural expression

and social formations. Thinking of scene as both a context for enactment and a point of contact means, then, that one can consider cultural phenomena generated at the juncture of local/global trajectories, noting also how relationships of scale inform both spatial and social aspects of cultural production. Taking this a step further, these might then be placed alongside the institutional and infrastructural mechanisms enabling/disabling cultural practices and creative expression, in order to allow a more nuanced description of the role they play in the creation and maintenance of extensive inter-related networks, circuits and alliances. In this capacity, the notion of scene allows a thicker account of the symbolic and material resources marshaled together to support cultural activity in the city.

“Scene” denotes an informal and often temporary arrangement of industries, institutions, audiences and infrastructures which are fundamental determinants affecting how a scene is constructed over time and in a given space. A scene, in this sense, can be seen as a spatial product of a social process. Straw has suggested that a musical scene be viewed as a “cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with one another within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization” (1991:). Defined as such, these cultural spaces, intersected by a number of competing and complementary trajectories, should not confine the notion of scene and locality to singular geographic sites. While scene and locality necessarily connote the site-specific, as physical locales in which particular cultural and material practices unfold, there are other significant dimensions to consider here (see also Olson, 1998). Lefebvre reminds us of the complex intersection of the local and the global:

No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local. This is not a consequence of the law of uneven development, but a law in its own right. The intertwinement of social spaces is also a law. Considered in isolation, such spaces are mere abstractions. As concrete abstractions, however, they attain “real” existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships.... It is important to note that such newly developed networks do not eradicate from their social context those earlier ones, superimposed over one another over the years, which constitute the various markets: local, regional, national and international markets; the market in commodities, the money or capital market, the labour market, and the market in works, symbols and signs; and lastly—the most recently created—the market in spaces themselves.

(Lefebvre, 86)

For Lefebvre, these networks concretize themselves in the urban environment, becoming layered in relation to established spatially embedded practices (material and symbolic).

Any contemporary scene is the locus where various flows (regional , national and international), come together in a complex fashion. It is around these flows that musicmakers attempt to fix their practices, generating a range of discourses and practices in response to the movement of people, places, things, and ideas.

In musical scenes there exist plenty of examples of what Arjun Appadurai has called “relational consciousness” where the symbolic and material dimensions of a scene are often inflected through practices which are oriented to both *here* and *there*. Earlier models of subcultural theory have tended to localize subcultural practices by referring to a much more bounded notion of territory, often speaking of neighbourhood pubs or clubs as the primary locus of activity. The spatial relations which characterize cultural practices and activities in music scenes are anchored locally, but can also be understood in terms of geographic dispersal and thereby less aligned with discrete territories. Over time, a scene becomes spatially embedded through various social, industrial and

institutional networks, all of which operate at a local and translocal level. We can read a scene as one node in a broader network then, where certain translocal flows pause, or, to borrow a metaphor from Lacan, where certain *points de capitons* (Straw, 1991) draw various scenic elements together. Thus, the relative success and continued vitality of many scenes is determined in part through the identification and dexterous manipulation, or management, of the economic, political and social vectors shaping local circumstance and those local restrictions which can only be ameliorated by extending market and imaginative horizons beyond the insularity of city-specific musical activity. Scene as it has been described here is by definition a spatial concept, but it should not be tied to notions of locality exclusively.

As a coda, this last point perhaps allows us to fold the discussion back upon subcultural theory, particularly as it prompts a consideration of the nature of musicmaking in the city and can give provide some indication as to why terms such as bohemia and scene might be more adequately disposed to describing the production of cultural spaces. Scenes, for example, appear marked less by the drama of *resistance*, less by an antagonistic relation to urban space and the others who live there, and more by an *insistence*, what Blum identifies as the scene's "social persistence" (Blum, 2001: 9), a demand and desire that cultural life in the city be made meaningful in a different way. This difference must itself be meaningful as it remains pivotal to the scene's definition. Difference also plays a role in producing the effervescence associated with bohemia, lending the city some of its ambience, propagating myths and narratives that indelibly shape the urban imaginary. The provocation posed by the relationship of the scene to the city, versus the one posed by the notion of subcultures, is one which suggests more

forcefully the role played by urban infrastructures, material and symbolic, in shaping important aspects of urban life.

In terms of musicmaking, subcultural theory and art world theories have a tendency to render the city a backdrop, not an active spatial trope figuring into the sociomusical experience. Scene and bohemia are terms that point us in a direction which can produce a more compelling portrait of musical life in the city. Descriptions of the sociomusical dimensions of city require the looseness of these terms in order to provoke those doing the examining to consider the musicmaking's many presences, absences and valences, as well as the struggle over its social value. Contrasting scene and bohemia moves the discussion of sociomusical experiences beyond the strict attention paid to class mechanics by widening the scope of analysis to consider the broader networks of affiliations and narratives, the material and symbolic resources, required to support musical activity. The study of contemporary musical practices requires a thicker account of musical and social practice, one which incorporates a mode of analysis which can document in greater detail the dialectical aspects of fixity and flow engendered through urban musical practice and thus allow for more discussions of spatial practices, spatial representations and representations of space. At the same time, the symbolic and material dimensions associated with musicmaking must also be accounted for, particularly how they interpenetrate and inform one another. Scene and bohemia can be paired in such a way to allow a depiction and analysis of urban life which captures more fully, even in their fleetingness, the dynamic range of forces at play in current musical practice in the city. Musicmaking is hardly an inscrutable object, but it does require more

attention paid to its social and spatial details as part of an effort to tease out its deeper structures.

What might we say more generally about the nature of culture production in the city, such that we can employ both bohemia and scene to more readily account for the production of cultural spaces in the city? Scene and bohemia are descriptive terms which seem best equipped to deal with the city's cultural spaces as they are more easily disposed to describe the diversity of conditions and social forms and atmospheres associated with contemporary cultural production. The city presents musicmakers with a range of creative amenities and personnel necessary for the production and reproduction of cultural spaces. It also provides them with a symbolic repertoire which informs how those spaces are collectively represented. Both of these dimensions overlap in musicmaking, becoming deeply enmeshed with one another, in ways that are geared towards taking advantage of the city's material and imaginative possibilities. Scene and bohemia are not mutually exclusive terms in this context, but they do possess important analytical distinctions which require more consideration. To this end, their spatial and social relations to urban musicmaking need to further consideration, and will be discussed in the following chapter according to a trio of conceptual frameworks which can set bohemia and scene into a productive association with one another.

NOTES

¹ Williams, 1982: 30

² Wolff, 1992: 137

³ Raymond Williams has covered much of this ground in his discussion of the sociology of culture, looking more generally at the history of cultural formations such as “bardic rules,” guilds, academies, movements and schools (Williams, 1982: 57-86).

⁴ This was written in 1976, prior to the rise of cultural studies, within which the “popular” has gained a much more compelling foothold.

⁵ Eno, Brian. *W Magazine*, Issue 6, September 1996. p. 15.

⁶ Frith, Simon. “The punk bohemians,” *New Society* (9 March), 1978, pp. 535-536.

⁷ Brooks morally upbraids the “bobos” for their lack of vision in the final paragraph of his book:

The bobos are a young elite, only dimly aware of themselves as an elite and unaware as yet of their capacities. This is a class of people who grew up with the word potential hanging around their necks, and in many ways still, their potential is more striking than their accomplishments. They have been trained, nurtured, and educated. They have been freed of some old restrictions and they have forged some new bonds. They are largely unscarred by economic depression and war. They can be silly a lot of the time. But if they raise their sights and ask the biggest questions, they have the ability to go down in history as the class that led America into another Golden Age. (Brooks, 2000: 273)

⁸ This is a sentiment echoed by Stephen Duncombe, in his account of the politics of underground culture, which claims that the collectivities of bohemia have given over to middle-class bourgeois naked self-interest (Duncombe, 1997). Susan Schwartzberg and Rebecca Solnit, in a photo essay dedicated to the decline of San Francisco’s bohemian underworld due to the dotcom boom reiterate these other claims:

This profession is famous for not being able to make a living from it. But creative people always find a way. There are different kinds of artists, people who are part of the scene—and loners. But the moments when art, or “bohemian” situations thrive are temporary—difficult situations at best. Creativity thrives in the cracks, in decadence. That’s often where culture grows, like bacteria in unhealthy dark areas, you see that throughout history, but they don’t last. Where are we going to go now? That’s what everyone asks.

(Emma Coleman cited in Solnit and Schwartzberg, 2001: 114)

⁹ Patricia Mainardi has described in detail the rise and fall of the Salon. She notes that by the late 1880s in France, the growth of large scale exhibition spaces (Bon Marché) was challenged by the appearance of smaller shops which also created art displays. The mass market created by the Salon, charged by many artists with vulgarizing art, was challenged in many ways by these smaller spaces which were notable for creating an atmosphere of

distinction and refinement, carefully arranging the artworks in their shop in a manner which disguised the shop's principle source of income (Mainardi, 1993: 145).

¹⁰ Hebdige, 1979: 90.

¹¹ Many studies prior to the 1970s were dedicated to the study of marginal groups whose ages varied from adolescent to middle-aged (see Sumner, Colin. Sociology of Deviance: An Obituary, London: Open University Press, 1994). The addition of "youth" to the definition of subculture is one of the variations which would shape the study of subcultures for the next three decades.

Chapter Two

“Setting the Scene: Frameworks for Analysis”

The previous chapter discussed some of the sociological aspects of cultural production, and put forward bohemia and scene as two terms which get at, in finer detail, the complex nature of urban musicmaking. Subcultures and art worlds, it was suggested, are two categories whose theoretical dispositions are not as well-suited to describing contemporary urban musicmaking, particularly its spatial dimensions (although each, in its own way, implies or introduces space as a quality of cultural production). Scenes and bohemias, on the other hand, should be more properly seen as the spatial expressions of musicmaking. Their utility is demonstrated best when they are combined, as in this capacity they can be used to describe the symbolic and material resources necessary for maintaining urban musicmaking’s vitality. However, as was made clear in the last chapter, for those studying the social aspects of musicmaking the difficulty lies in the fact that scene and bohemia are descriptive categories which lack analytical rigour and conceptual coherence. What follows is an attempt to rectify this, first by further exploring the relationship between scene and bohemia; second, by introducing three frameworks within which musicmaking might be more fully examined, thereby orienting discussion to issues concerning the production of cultural spaces. Of note here is the role musicmaking plays in shaping the experience of place as well as how an image of place determines the spatial practices and symbol-making associated with musical production.

The relationship of musicmaking to urban places has recently become an issue for a number of scholars working in the field of popular music studies (and elsewhere, such

as geography).¹ As the city has lately come under closer scrutiny, its cultural aspects, specifically musicmaking, have also been re-evaluated. In this context, the value and meaning of musicmaking in the city has been described in various ways and a selection of these studies are concerned with the details of urban cultural production (Leyshon, Matless and Revill, eds., 1998; Cohen, 1994, 1998; Finnegan, 1989, etc.). Yet, only some of these efforts extend their consideration to issues of spatiality. Ruth Finnegan, a scholar who has attempted to account for the space of musicmaking, has examined the issue through an anthropological lens, tracing out patterns of movement and belonging which have definitive spatial expression. Musicmaking, as she describes it, is firmly embedded in locality, composed of a set of practices and social relations embedded in place through the complex layering of networks, or what she calls “pathways,” which have temporal/spatial properties as well as material/symbolic ones. Musicmaking for Finnegan is intimately bound up with the material and symbolic facets of the city, where career trajectories, various narratives and myths, skills acquisition and circuits of movement form multi-dimensional channels that pull or propel musicmakers through urban space. These pathways map out patterns of musical development and belonging. As such, they provide lines of continuity but also produce the varied rhythms and life-cycles associated with urban musicmaking.

Following from Finnegan, it can be said that urban musicmaking produces a dense agglomeration of attitudes and practices which feed off of the city’s many amenities. At the same time, musicmaking serves a compensatory function, helping to mitigate the city’s atomizing potential. It does this in numerous ways. First, and perhaps foremost, musicmaking can be understood as one of the primary vehicles through which a

sense of belonging, both to place and others, is felt and articulated. Second, it is a social medium, one which provides forms of connectivity to a place by and through the occupation of performance, rehearsal and studio spaces, but whose continuing value is also confirmed in those extra-musical spaces such as bars, cafés, etc., where social ties are continually renewed. The built environment, in this capacity, is a vital part of the hard infrastructure associated with musicmaking in the city. Third, musicmaking is also embedded in the social milieu of the city through more symbolic means. The media (radio, newspapers, zines, etc.) constructs and supports a sense of connectivity, an imagined community, in its representation and promotion of local musical life. Posters, handbills and flyers find their way into cafes, onto lampposts and mailboxes, forming a promotional paper trail through which musicmaking announces its presence. Finally, musicmaking also provides the context for an ethical engagement with the city, tying place to community, a centripetal force countering the city's centrifugal forces. Together the material, symbolic and ethical aspects of musicmaking have helped to forge a cultural apparatus which supports and nourishes a diverse range of music-centered proclivities. In a more general sense, the set of cultural practices associated with musicmaking allows participants the opportunity to immerse themselves in the material and imaginative dimensions of city life. As Finnegan reminds us:

Music and musicians are...recognized as having the special role of creating a space in social life and framing events as "rituals"—a responsibility of deep and essential significance for our society. But there is also more to be said. For music does more than just frame this space: it also *fills* it.

(Finnegan, 336; italics in original)

Finnegan's point is well-suited to describing the social production of a cultural space which allows for a form of civic engagement centered on music.

The value of urban musicmaking extends beyond those who are directly involved with it. Participating in a city's musical culture also produces a compelling vision of urban vitality, a collective activity which leads to a sense of "communal ambience," which, while a difficult benefit to quantify, is one often highlighted in promotional projects devoted to civic boosterism. Those in charge of municipal promotion in cities recognize the value of their musical heritage, and use it as a selling point for potential investors (Böse, 2001) and/or tourists.² And while those who manage "entrepreneurial cities" (Hall and Hubbard, eds., 1998) often view the value of musical culture only in instrumental terms, helping to sell a place (Ward, 1998), it has over the last decade firmed up as a more well-defined object of critical study. Whether positioned as a marketing tool or vital cultural force, musicmaking's significance as part of the cultural life of the city can hardly be underestimated. Due in certain respects to its many diverse facets, musicmaking has a functional utility which can serve numerous interests, some of which work in tandem, and others which work in opposition to one another. Accordingly, the privileged value of musicmaking in the city can be understood as a manifestation of both a vibrant sociality, a *puissance*, which co-exists alongside keen commercial interests, imbuing it with an aura of significance which singles it out as a mode of cultural production often read as central to urban life by promoters, practitioners and citizens.

Thus, we can understand musicmaking as made up of inter-related sets of signifying practices and social relations which together inflect the production and representation of urban cultural spaces. Musicmaking in this capacity organizes relations and practices in such a way that they help to cultivate an attachment to place. Scene and

bohemia, the results of placemaking strategies, are two related cultural spaces whose production is often heavily indebted to musical practice. What is the precise relation between scene and bohemia? Where does a scene end and bohemia begin? The question might be construed as a misleading one, as one could overstate their differences at the expense of a more complex analysis of the symbiotic relationship wherein their social function and cultural values mutually inscribe one another. Bohemia and scene are in fact two spatial properties of musicmaking which reinforce one another by linking social relations and spatial practices through the activities associated with creative labour. Making causal determinations is perhaps a moot point; they both have sociospatial qualities which emerge as a direct consequence of musical practice. Thus, to claim that one comes as a result of the other misjudges how deeply imbricated they are in one another.

What then are the distinctions that can be drawn between the two? “Bohemia,” Christopher Kent suggests, “is not just an artistic and literary phenomenon: it is a social phenomenon as well” (Kent, 1973; cited in Grana, 1990: 158). This points to the many attributes of bohemia. Bohemia, as it is defined here, certainly has a recognizable urban materiality. For the better part of a century and a half it has demonstrated an unflinching allegiance to specific city spaces, flourishing in neglected, derelict, forgotten, or abandoned urban sites and areas. Bohemias are notable for the efforts made by its members to mark their difference both socially and spatially, a process of differentiation haunted, also noted above, by an acute sense of ambivalence. On the one hand, the act of rehabilitating urban space, bohemia’s recuperative project (the one prior to acts of gentrification), makes it notable for its conservative impulses. Some of these gestures

bear the marks of nostalgia, harkening back to some imagined pre-lapsarian moment of un- or less-alienated creative labour and communality, an attempt to cling to, or renew, some residual sense of urban civility which are deemed lost or forgotten. In this context, bohemia's primary strategy is one of urban re-enchantment. On the other hand, many more claims on urban space are designed to stave off the advances of capital as it continually encroaches into all aspects of the urban life and are wrapped in notions of resistance. In both cases, the results are spatially motivated acts based around negotiated and often twinned strategies of resistance and retreat which can be seen to produce a particular urban type, "the bohemian." This activity also produces the city's distinct tenor, its bohemian ambience.

In this capacity, one can attribute to bohemia an idealistic quality which is doubly motivated. It is often oriented towards a past, with allusions often made to other bohemian sites. At the same time, it is often oriented towards the future, in the sense that it has some goal or desire as its primary motivation, one of its organizing principles and *telos*, however inchoate. The inclination in this formulation is to see bohemia as tied in many respects to the quality of city life, associated most often with a particular ambience, forming a structure of feeling (as Williams might suggest), both of which, as will be demonstrated below, have a guiding influence on cultural production. Figuring bohemia as some allusive and elusive urban structure of feeling lends it a semiotic and sociological resonance which can in turn help to raise more precise questions about how the image of a city informs cultural practice. The individual activities associated with musicmaking--from rehearsal to posting handbills, to press coverage to radio play, to performance--work in concert a bohemian ambience which brings us closer to what Doreen Massey means

when she describes a city's "cityness," in that it serves as an index, however difficult to quantify, for locals and non-locals alike of the city's tolerance for difference as well as its potential for cultural productivity. Bohemia in this respect extends beyond cultural production (because bohemia is not simply about being pro-actively productive—it is also provides a space for those who might choose dissipation and withdrawal), informally grouping together a variety of disparate spatial and representational practices, which in their totality add to the nuanced textures of city life. Bohemia, then, is an ideal and idealized space, a sign of a city's emotional life, as well as a material and imaginative structure with significant sociospatial consequences for musicmakers.

Music scenes, by way of contrast, are often securely anchored to networks and circuits which have explicit industrial and institutional affiliations; in other words, they are more grounded, both materially and symbolically, than bohemia. Scenic practices are often more practically oriented, towards the "project" as Alan Blum suggests, and while both scene and bohemia inscribe themselves onto urban space in a deliberate fashion, scene does so in a way which is moored to more established, "concrete" circuits and alignments, and thus seems governed by a pragmatism and is attended to with an earnest gravitas that is often sidestepped in bohemia. Scene, in this case, has a tangible, material dimension which dominates over any symbolic aspects (although they're not absent; rather, they function according to a different ratio of significance than the ones found in bohemia). As was suggested in the previous chapter, scenes function in relation to the fixity and flow of people, images, ideas, money, etc., and can be understood as local articulations of a global, translocal process. The way in which musical activity coalesces around certain practices, individuals and sites lends the scene a sense of dynamism.

That said, a scene is rarely burdened by a well-defined *telos*, a precisely formulated future goal; instead, it is characterized by a range of strategies arrayed in such a manner that they lend it a situational and functional unity which often mitigates or supersedes its apparent aimlessness. In this form, the scene functions as a vehicle through which the city's resources are identified and utilized in order to produce and maintain a space that can accommodate the current demands and desires of musicmakers. This means using various sites such as bars, performance and rehearsal spaces, industries like community radio, as well as extra-musical spaces such as cafés and restaurants, which, while vital to the continued functioning of the scene, are often seen as secondary to the preferred reading of scene as a phenomenon based primarily around performance. derivative records, for example, utilized its connections with CBC Radio and Cargo Canada to assemble the necessary resources to guide its operations, which, in their dual focus on Montreal and elsewhere maintained a kind of ambivalent attachment to place which suited their purposes very well. These sorts of behind-the-scenes activity, musicmaking's backstage aspects, make its directionality difficult to ascertain, its motivations more nebulous. If "bohemian" as an adjective describes a city's "buzz" (borrowing from Landry) or, at a deeper level, its structure of feeling, scene can be used to account for the manner in which people are tied more explicitly to place through practice, the city's harder infrastructure. Scene understood as a kind of hard infrastructure can reveal how musicmakers orient themselves to specific sites and activities through their actual use.

Note also that the scene is different from bohemia as much for what is seen as for what is not. Much of what happens in musicmaking takes place, as one might expect,

behind the scenes. Bohemia, by contrast, is much more about ostentatious display, announcing its difference through a kind of stylish efflorescence that makes the scene look modest by comparison. Simply put, scene is better at describing the formal social organization produced in the acts associated with urban musicmaking, bohemia, its affective states, the emotional forms of attachment to place and other people, as well as the ambient by-products which form the cumulative textures vital to the social reproduction of cultural space.

Although there are definite distinctions to be made between each, scene and bohemia are two terms which can assist in theorizing musicmaking and its role in the production of meaningful cultural spaces in the city. Their lack of definition limits, in certain respects, their applicability to a possibly more enriched study of the sociospatial aspects of musicmaking in the city, however. In order to lend both of them more theoretical utility, introduced below is a set of frameworks for analysis. By defining what are called here the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks in relation to the notion of musicmaking, terms such as scene and bohemia which have otherwise been somewhat vague in definition and loose in application, can be given more conceptual coherence. Space remains the dominant trope, and as such, the following will consider context, social action and symbolic systems as inter-related components of musicmaking which have taken on specific spatial definition. These frameworks remain the guideposts for constructing a better analytical model for documenting scenes and bohemias in relation to urban musicmaking. Consequently, the manner in which social relations and spatial practices come together in the process of musicmaking is taken up throughout.

Frameworks for Analysis

There are countless ways to think about musicmaking in the city, but the express purpose here is to loan the terms “scene” and “bohemia” more theoretical purchase. Thus, the following sub-sections are an attempt to lend each more rigour. They focus in particular on musicmaking’s relation to the city, as a way of exploring Blum’s notion of the scene’s “fundamental ambiguity.” This ambiguity, as noted in the previous chapter is also a defining element of bohemia. Three frameworks are developed in order to group together and then explore some of these ideas: experiential, materialist and discursive. “Frameworks” was chosen over other terms such as “category” or “organizing principle” because the former are designed to act as skeletal outlines upon which an analysis of scenes can be more readily built. The term echoes, in some respects, Goffman’s concept of frames analysis, which, as he claims, is designed to “isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense out of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject.” (Goffman, 1974: 10). Goffman’s use of the term is instructive as it enables a description of how individuals “frame” their experience in a phenomenological sense. The choice of framework here stems from how many respondents involved in this research project understood musicmaking according to variations of these three terms. That is, they perceived musicmaking in its experiential, material and discursive senses, as a “situation” although they never explicitly identified these as operational frameworks guiding their perception and conception of musicmaking in the city. If we can read musicmaking as a sociological event, it introduces what Goffman calls a “primary framework.” At the level

of experience, these frameworks have variable degrees of organization which can be read as either informal or formal:

Some are neatly presentable in terms of entities, postulates, and rules; others...appear to have not apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective. Whatever the degree of organization, however, each primary framework allows its user to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms.

(Goffman, 21)

Beyond the more subjective or existential aspects of Goffman's framework model, as conceptual frameworks they can help order the many facets of urban musicmaking and lend the *scene* and *bohemia* more sociological definition. The experiential, material and discursive frameworks are inter-related terms, and as complements to one another, the differences between them could be construed as artificial. So, on the one hand, it might be said that the material and discursive frameworks produce or shape a specific experience of the city. On the other hand, the experiential may be taken as an umbrella term which incorporates both the material and discursive. However, they need to be distinguished from one another in order to take into account the many relationships which connect members of a scene and the scene to the city. In fact, their specificity can impart some coherence to the use of scene and bohemia as vehicles for a wider analysis of the cluster of activities that define musicmaking.

The usefulness of these frameworks in attempting to describe a city's scenic contours and bohemian ambience is important to consider as it reveals a great deal about the multiple dimensions attached to urban musicmaking. For many musicmakers, there is a pronounced emphasis on a specific vision of the city, a privileged image of the city and what kind of amenities it should provide. Symbolic values are attributed to the city,

which, while they might appear as abstract phenomena, inform musicmaking in profound ways. The sociomusical experience of the city unfolds and is perceived, conceived and articulated within, through and in relation to these images. Thus, these organizational frameworks are useful in the sense that they can consider context, action and symbol making in relation to musicmaking in the city. Musicmaking's spatiality is manifest in each of its many dimensions. For instance, as cultural spaces both bohemia and scene become spatially embedded over time through various processes of sedimentation, in that they are located in and associated with specific places, engender specific experiences and produce specific stories and narratives. Meanings accumulate in a manner that gives the city texture, a semiotic richness which complicates and deepens the desire to render it legible (Lynch, 1961). Keeping this multi-dimensionality in mind, all three frameworks can be effectively triangulated in such a way as to provide a richer analysis of urban sociomusical practices.

Experiential Framework

City life as normative ideal acknowledges not only the necessary desire for the security of home, but also the inevitability of migration, change, and conflict, and so too the ethical need for an openness to unassimilated otherness. The city becomes the symbolic space in which we act out our more or less imaginative answers to the questions which define our ethos: "how to be 'at home' in a world where our identity is not given, our being-together in question, our destiny contingent or uncertain: the world of the violence of our own self-constitution."

(James Donald, 200, citing Rajchman, 1991)

Are space and place the environmental equivalents of the human need for adventure and safety, openness and definition? How long does it take to form a lasting attachment to place? Is the sense of place a quality of awareness poised between being rooted in place, which is unconscious, and being alienated, which goes with

exacerbated consciousness—and exacerbated because it is only or largely mental?

(Yi-Fu Tuan, 1977: 202)

As the first framework used to analyze the city/scene/bohemian relationship, the experiential framework introduces an intersubjective and intrasubjective way of linking the individual musicmaker to the city, musicmakers to scene/bohemian, and scene/bohemian to city. Following from Donald's claim, the experiential dimension gains its meaningful charge by highlighting the role the "Other" plays in the formation of individual subjectivity and group identity. Also, as Tuan's questions suggest, attachment to place remains a complex aspect of city (and by inference scene or bohemian) life, bound up in processes associated with individual and collective expression, fuelling the tension found between assimilation and differentiation. Alan Blum states it is "(t)hrough its scenes the city represents its desire for inhabitation that is both communal and pluralistic on the one hand, and on the other, exclusive, special and intimate" (27). Thus, there is in the urban scene a primary paradox that hinges on solidarity and social difference or distinction (social, racial, sexual and in many cases, linguistic). It is through the rarefied and arcane structures of the scene that this paradox is often foregrounded. In the many activities associated with musicmaking, at the same time the axes of differentiation are being established, a sense of belonging is also more plainly articulated. This can lead to a productive tension, lending musicmaking and, by extension the city, its energy, vitality, ambience (Maffesoli would call this a "communal ambience," the atmosphere generated by *puissance*, evidence of social power, or the "will to live"), and perhaps most importantly, its affective charge (Maffesoli, 1996).

The experiential framework can help outline the relationship of musicmaking to place, noting the ways in which members of a scene orient themselves to the city, to one another, and then in a collective form generate a bohemian-flavoured communal ambience. The experiential as an intrasubjective and intersubjective aspect of musicmaking, focused on the social mechanics associated with individual agency and group interaction, tells us something more about the sociomusical dimension of musicmaking than either the material or the discursive frameworks do. The experiential framework focuses primarily on the subjective aspects of musicmaking and in this capacity offers insight into how a particular cultural space is understood by individual members and can be used to document subjective accounts of how the sociomusical experience unfolds in the city. At the same time, the scope of the experiential can be expanded to incorporate questions centered on how the scene is positioned in relation to other scenes specifically and the city more generally and thus helps lend musicmaking some its bohemian character. The experiential framework provides descriptions of musicmaking according to its human, interpersonal scale, but can also introduce a better perspective on the social function maps of differentiation play in shaping the musicmaking practices. Through this framework, we can describe how the scene provides a space for the fostering of specific allegiances and affiliations, thereby accounting for, in a more intimate way, musicmakers' affective ties to a particular place.

The experiential aspect of city/scene/bohemian life necessarily incorporates an existential dimension, which implies a way of learning, knowing and being-in-the-city. In terms of learning, the city-scene-bohemia relationship reveals itself in the various codes of conduct a member of a musical scene is expected to abide by. In the scene's

complex network of institutional and industrial contexts ranging from radio, to bars, to clubs, to universities, to studios and to record labels, musicmakers are instructed as to how to behave in the scene, by adopting attitudes and behaviour that are deemed appropriate for a given social setting. This may also mean acquiring a “bohemian” attitude. Being ingratiated into a scene, for example, means that certain ways of being-in-the-city must be acknowledged and adhered to, with evidence of their acceptance embodied in taste (signs of allegiance evoked through participation either as musicmaker or audience member) and objectified in style (the adoption of specific fashions, second-hand clothes for example, as a kind of uniform). They are all expressions of a bohemian sensibility. More importantly, the rules of the game must be respected and certain performative codes have to be acknowledged, a stylized response which acts as a tacit form of rule acceptance. As a way of mapping social distinction onto urban space, the pedagogical dimension of the experiential framework is a point of entry into an analysis of the way in which scenes and bohemia function according to a kind of moral economy, what Donald calls the *ethos* associated with urban living. This is by its very nature a necessary part of how musicmakers produces a scene’s or bohemia’s unique spatial identity. Jonathan Raban, speaking of a wealthy London neighbourhood, puts this succinctly:

To be part of the city, you needed a city style—an economic grammar of identity through which you could project yourself. Clearly, this was something to be learned; an expertise, a code with clear conventions. If you could not get the surface right, what was there of expressing whatever lay beneath it?

(56)

A purposeful and deliberate attempt at style requires at least some understanding of the codes available in the city. The choice of lifestyle in the city implies having some knowledge of

its social mechanics as well as providing evidence of a willingness to participate. At the same time, it exhibits a depth of commitment and allegiance to a particular place.

The city itself is often understood as an object of knowledge, through which certain facts about urban life and its bearing on musicmaking might be divined. Socially, scenes and bohémias are notable for their imposition of boundaries through informal monitoring and policing mechanisms based around style, level of commitment, attitude and a visible willingness to participate (seen to be “on the scene”). The imposition of horizons of possibility like these manifest themselves in the spatial aspects of the scene and its relation to the city. The experience of the city comes to be refracted through the types of knowledge disseminated amongst musicmakers, much of which is transferred through personal contact, but also courtesy a variety of media (zines, community radio, alternative weeklies). In this way, the experience and knowledge of place and others is subject to various circumscriptions lending the sociomusical experience gains its unique shape. As certain social and cultural activities become routinized (the dedication of certain nights of the week at bars to certain events – bluegrass nights, DJ nights, film nights, open-mic poetry nights, etc.), and as certain ways of experiencing the city become ingrained through processes of habituation (the ritualized return to specific bars, cafés, etc.), what becomes common knowledge and what remains privileged knowledge are further distinguished. To take one example: the city seems to give up its secrets to members of a scene, as new performance and rehearsal spaces come into being, often in neglected, dormant or forgotten sites. But musicmakers themselves consciously and unconsciously institute codes of secrecy and work in a rarefied manner which serves to further distance themselves from others, while at the same time galvanizing a shared

interest in a specialized way of being in the city. It is evidence of what Blum has described as the shared intimacy of the scene, and it is through this process that a spectral bohemian structure of feeling is transformed into something more expressive, an ambience enunciating its difference through the socially willed circumscription of certain spaces and select social relations.

The notion of being-in-the-city can be used to consider situations of co-presence, the kinds and degrees of intimacy found in the face-to-face encounter with others in a shared cultural space. In performance spaces, bars, and cafés, for example, one can hear conversations about various musical projects, a cataloguing of those willing to participate, how certain musical goals might be best achieved (heard alongside more mundane or salacious bits of gossip as well). In this capacity, certain sites take on an important affective role in musicmaking's infrastructure. Two comments from Blum bring this dimension to light and place it firmly within the experiential framework:

Heidegger speaks of place as a process, an event such as making room, opening a region, setting up a seat for "reiterable possibilities" of future emplacement.... (H)e brings place into contact with what we have come to think of as assumptions or presuppositions, with the local constraints on the actor, through the notions of nearness which brings about what he calls neighbourhood. He says of neighbourhood that it means "dwelling in nearness...in the nearness of neighbourhood, place is particularized and made intimate, face-to-face."... That is, place is the scene of the encounter. Place becomes specific in the scene which it constructs and inhabits.

(22)

Scene, bohemia and placemaking are mutually reinforcing components of urban musical life in this case. Social relations and spatial relations are bound up with one another in ways which lend meaning to cultural expression and the value of collectivity. In making a scene, one which stretches out in space and time as Blum suggests, the

emotive dimensions and affective affiliations begin to form a connective tissue which links individuals in common cultural pursuit. It is here where the social value and the singularity of the scene becomes most pronounced. Blum continues by referring to Heidegger's notion of neighbourhood and its relationship to place-making in the city:

Part of what we might take from this is that the scene is the place for bringing to view the affiliations which bind people as a collective of co-speakers as if they are dwelling in nearness to one another, as if together they incarnate a structure of mutual recognition. Any scene makes concrete and specific the intimacy of the inhabitants of a region of speech, and so, in its being done, is a kind of emplacement, a way of making room for its talk, and as Heidegger says, that which "gives us room and allows us to do something... the seat that gives us room to experience how matters stand..." (qtd. in Casey 1997, 282). Neighbourhood is then a metaphor for the desire out of which such 'making room' or emplacement unfolds, for the ways it settles at sites which it constructs and inhabits as scenes of the encounter which is place, and this habitation, makes specific its structure of mutual recognition (Kolb, 1986).

(ibid)

It is precisely this notion of neighbourhood, of nearness and affiliation, through which a desire for, and sense of belonging to, place and one another is articulated. Scene, as Blum describes it here, shares that affective dimension with neighbourhood, the anchor which allows abstract space to become a meaningful place. Montreal's Plateau region exemplifies this kind of relationship to place. It is the locus for both living and a great deal of musicmaking, where the neighbourhood itself exhibits many of attributes Blum says are found in scenes.

Heidegger's notions of being and belonging, as David Harvey reminds us, and following from Relph, are important because they direct our attention to the way places "are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations" (Relph in Harvey, 1995: 11). "Place experiences are necessarily

time-deepened and memory-qualified,” Relph continues, and this is one of the primary social functions of both bohemia and scene (ibid). Elsewhere, in a lengthy discussion of the phenomenological aspects of human geography, Relph states that “the essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centers of human existence” (Relph, 1976: 43). Notably, bohemia and scene veer away from this formulation in that they are a deliberate, stylized responses to the abstract and alienating aspects of city life, acting as stated above as social media, through which the city gets personalized and socialized.

This draws the discussion away from the experiential aspects of musicmaking,, for it is apparent that it is not places solely devoted to musicmaking which shape the sociomusical experience of the city; it is also the peripheral, more mundane aspects of everyday city life which have a certain bearing on the value of musicmaking. It is in their ritualized use that spaces become places and clearly the notion of habit, habituation and habitat are important aspects of the experience of the scene and the city. In a discussion of Bourdieu’s notion of habitus below, the important role it plays in the materiality of a music scene will be explored in more detail. Suffice it to say, the experiential framework can begin to document how people relate to others at a more prosaic and subjective level within that more abstract entity we call the city.

Materialist Framework

Culture should be understood in an inclusive anthropological sense to encompass both ideology and material conditions insofar as they are united within a form of life or a style of practical involvement.

(Ian Angus)³

Is there a political economy of the scene? Certainly, the city is a marketplace, the ebb and flow of its energies is continuously organized by the objective of doing business and the imaginative structure that inspires such enterprise. The relentless circulation of capital is a constant search for markets, a search that threatens (in some eyes) to dissolve all local constraints. Scenes are calculated and reconfigured as opportune occasions for investment and the creation of consumers. Scenes are made and unmade under the insatiable drive for maximizing profit and minimizing loss, the drive of the logic of restricted economy.

(Alan Blum, 2001: 25)

In moving from the experiential framework to the materialist framework, the limits of the former become more apparent, particularly in relation to the broader sociostructural aspects of both the scene and bohemia. What the experiential framework cannot facilitate is a description of how the ordering of space and time influences the levels and degrees of meaning and affect associated with musicmaking. In its attention to microsociological detail, it does not tell us much about the organizing logic of the scene, nor does it give us insight into the forces affecting the social mechanics of the musical experience. The experiential framework helps to describe the spatial extension of sentiment or feeling, outlining the way in which a certain site or place gains its affective charge and how it is inscribed by individuals or groups with personal or shared value and meaning. However it does not allow the analysis to go much beyond the intimate and interpersonal. Identity and a sense of belonging are socially structured, and those social structures are embedded in time and place and are determined in many ways by the underlying forces which are always at work in the construction of meaningful places. The materialist framework, with its wider scope, by contrast, can be used to map the relationship between more abstract forces such as history, economics and politics, as well

as help orient analysis towards their mutual articulation in the social production of a cultural space like the music scene.

David Harvey states the value of the materialist perspective as one from which “we can... argue that objective conceptions of time and space are necessarily created through material practices and processes which serve to reproduce social life.... Each distinctive mode of production or social formation will, in short, embody a distinctive bundle of time and space practices and concepts.” (Harvey 1995: 204). Reading a city’s music scene as an articulated moment, one stop in the trans-local flow of goods, images, ideas and people, can reveal relationships between various structures within (and often against) which processes of individuation and group formation are set. This includes the built environment as well as the industries and institutions which affect social activity, cultural practice and the material world. Understanding bohemia as emerging from a specific set of social and economic relations can better position it as nestled within a matrix of larger material forces. For our purposes, the materialist framework can be used to describe the sets of relationships that exist between city, scene and bohemia, but also be employed to talk more specifically about social relations, relations of production, of distribution, etc., as they unfold in the city, noting how they affect musicmakers.

When discussing the social production of space, and in order to make the materialist argument about urban social and spatial relations, a number of theorists utilize Lefebvre’s tripartite model of spatial dimensions: material spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation (Harvey, 1995; Shields, 1991, 1999; Urry 1995). Spatial practices have to do with physical material flows, “interactions that occur in and across space in such a way as to assure production and social reproduction.”

(Harvey, 218-219). The second dimension, representations of space, has to do with semiotics, and encompasses all those signifying practices (including codes) that permit discussion about material practices. They are “forms of knowledge and hidden ideological content of codes, theories, and the conceptual depictions of space linked to production relations.” (Shields, 1991: 54). This dimension is what allows the experience of place to be effectively communicated, perceived and understood. The final category, spaces of representation, has more to do with a metalanguage of sorts, referring us again to codes, but also “spatial discourses,” imaginary and symbolic landscapes, taking into consideration also symbolic spaces which appear in the built environment, but also museums, in paintings, etc. It is, as Shields states, “a matter of functions and affects of a given, often untheorized understanding of place. This amounts to the effect conceptions of reality have in terms of conditioning discursive possibilities” (ibid). These three dimensions are all inter-related: “(T)he spaces of representation...have the potential not only to affect representation of space but also act as the material productive force with respect to spatial practices” (219). The last two dimensions are better-suited to the discursive aspects of musicmaking, but they have a material consequence in the sense that they are experienced, that in the process of “making space” a certain element of cohesion and continuity is also established, through which either an individual or group identity might be constituted.

In thinking about sociality and spatiality, Rob Shields reminds us that spatial practices have a broader significance, connected as they are to social practice and the relating of individuals to space, “a certain level of spatial competence and a distinct type of spatial performance by individuals” which consists of the “individualised

performances or enactments of spatialisation by individuals in their daily habits and minute postures and mannerisms” (52-53). As stated above, as a scene becomes spatially embedded, as it becomes concretized, certain resources coalesce and develop which feed social activity and cultural practice. Musicians, for example, begin to congregate in chosen bars and performance sites, some of which are colonized to such a degree that they become significant and momentarily indispensable nodes which serve both social and performative needs. Spatial practices are altered, then, as the scene takes shape. The notion of spatial practices is important, in that

they provide a *mise en scene* which suggests the appropriateness of particular actions and where these are ritualized, particular roles. But, it remains practices which ‘articulate’ the multitudinous possibilities of a given site. These actions are themselves part of the constitution of the qualitative reality of sites as places where certain events and actions are known and expected to take place.
(53)

Spatial and social practices are mutually articulated accordingly in the materialist analysis. A proper materialist examination considers the sociospatial dimensions of musical life, connecting social process to material forms and conditions., and in fact, scenes shift from place to place due to a variety of factors (changes in alcohol regulations, the appearance of pay-to-play options, changes in demography, which can dictate who has more discretionary income, etc.). As such, the materialist framework gains its theoretical salience by facilitating an investigation of debates surrounding structure and agency, particularly as they play out in terms of spatial practices.

Theories of structuration provide conceptual tools which can lead to explorations of how the structure and agency dialectic plays out spatially. The work of Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu offer conceptually nuanced analysis of the

structure/agency model which can be put to good use in a materialist analysis. The relevance of Bourdieu in describing the social production of space, for instance, is highlighted by both Harvey and Shields who reiterate Bourdieu's notion of habitus and field as spatialized concepts. Harvey makes use of Bourdieu's concept of habitus to link certain spatial practices with a materialist base:

Bourdieu explains how a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions can at one and the same time be put to work flexibly to achieve “infinitely diversified tasks” while at the same time being “in the last instance”... engendered out of the material experience of “objective structures,” and therefore “out of the economic basis of the social formation in question.” The mediating link is provided by the concept of ‘habitus’—a “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisation” which produces practices which in turn tend to reproduce the objective conditions which produced the generative principle in the first place.

(219)

Bourdieu's own definition of the habitus makes explicit its connection to social space:

The concept of habitus accounts for the orientation and position of individuals in space, and social space specifically. Habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgements and the system of classification of these practices. It is the relationship between the two capacities which define the habitus, the capacity to differentiate and appreciate these practices and products (taste), that the represented social world, i.e., the space of life-styles, is constituted.

(Bourdieu, 1984: 173)

The habitus accounts for the continuity of social practices over time, but it also allows for the adjustment and recalibrations of taste, desires, etc. As a spatially oriented “structuring structure of structuration,” the habitus is framed specifically by numerous forces yet remains highly flexible:

Because habitus is an endless capacity to engender products—thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions—whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioning and conditional freedom it secures is

as remote from a creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from a simple mechanical reproduction of the initial conditionings.
(Bourdieu, 1977: 95, cited in Harvey, 219)

For Bourdieu, the habitus is “socialized subjectivity” (Bourdieu cited in Wacquant 1992: 126) which is firmly located within broader social structures and explicitly linked to material conditions. The habitus is a matrix of dispositions which are transposable, allowing individuals to adapt within a limited (but by no means limiting) set of possibilities: “The habitus is the source of the series of moves which are objectively organized as strategies without being the product of a genuine strategic intention - which would presuppose at least that they are perceived as one strategy among other possible strategies” (73). Habitus, in other words, “expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a disposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 1992: 18). Even though it is both regular and regulated, there is little sense of calculation or conscious strategy in all of this; instead, habitus orients individuals and their activities in such a way that they appear natural, or as “second nature.” It does this because it is “a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks” (Wacquant: 18).

The habitus is one concept which links routes to routines, but discussions of agency draw us out of the materialist framework in a manner refers us in many ways back to the experiential framework. We can make recourse to Lefebvre to ground the discussion that the link between city and scene can be read in an explicitly materialist

fashion. The link between social spaces and social relations is made more explicit in his schema:

A social space cannot be adequately accounted for either by nature (climate, site) or by its previous history. Nor does the growth of the forces of production give rise in any direct causal fashion to a particular space or a particular time. Mediations, and mediators, have to be taken into consideration: the action of groups, factors within knowledge, within ideology, or within the domain of representations. Social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such 'objects' are thus not only things but also relations. As objects, they possess discernible peculiarities, contour and form. Social labour transforms them, rearranging their positions within spatio-temporal configurations without necessarily affecting their materiality, their natural state (as in the case, for instance, of an island, gulf, river or mountain).

It is this notion of networks, of pathways as Finnegan might suggest, which anchors people to places, mainly by mediating their experience of place. These mediations are multiple and multifarious, as Lefebvre notes, in turn affecting how they take root in real time and place. It is this dialectic process, between material conditions and social labour and creative practices, which gives place its significance. The scene is a site of possibility and experimentation, yet in many ways substantiates the city's social hierarchies. In this sense, scenes, like urban spaces, can be read not only as epiphenomena but also as "direct products of deep-level, contentious forces pertinent to systems of sociospatial organization" (Gottdiener, 1985: 207). The materialist framework can help to theorize the relation between material form and social process, between agency and structure. As it is presented here, this particular framework can be used to link agency and structure in ways which tells us more about the materiality of the sociomusical experience, particularly as it takes shape in the city. Mediating as it does

between macrosociological and microsociological levels, the materialist framework can provide a less impressionistic (in all senses of the word) and denser portrait of the city/scene/bohemia relationship than the one we get with the experiential framework. The concept of habitus, for instance, offers an opportunity to examine how certain spaces order movement through the city, determining the circuits or pathways taken by musicmakers as part of their sociomusical experience, but it also leaves open some room for individual and/or group activity as it might impact upon the city.

Analyzing the sociomusical context according to how its social relations are mapped out creates an opportunity to consider how larger forces shape experiences. The double meaning of “sense of place” becomes more pronounced when the material forces structuring social and spatial relations come into focus. Hierarchies, power-laden social relations, are embedded in the various structuring elements of the city, scene and bohemia. The materialist framework can help make sense of the social organization of the scene and bohemia (as attitude and atmosphere) in relation to the city can by accounting for its material forms, mainly by examining significant sites and its institutional and industrial contexts as the settings in which individual agency bumps up against social and institutional structures. If the experiential framework is about individual agency and group identity, the materialist framework is about agency in relation to structure, both social and built, a relationship that can reveal the principles of structuration such as those forwarded by Bourdieu. Through the materialist framework, we can account for difference and regularity as aspects of musicmaking which, as Bourdieu’s habitus as embodied social structure suggests, reveal more about the underlying forces shaping its sociospatial manifestations *qua* scene and bohemia.

Discursive Framework

A scene itself can be defined as an overproductive signifying community; that is, far more semiotic information is produced than can be rationally parsed. Such scenes remain a necessary condition for the production of exciting rock'n'roll music capable of moving past the mere expression of locally significant cultural values and generic development—that is, beyond stylistic permutation—toward an interrogation of dominant structures of identification, and potential cultural transformation. The constitutive feature of local scenes of live musical performance is their evident display of semiotic disruption, their potentially dangerous overproduction and exchange of musicalized signs of identity and community. Through this display of more than can be understood, encouraging the radical recombination of elements of the human in new structures of identification, local rock'n'roll scenes produce momentary transformations within dominant cultural meanings.

(Barry Shank, 1995: 22)

Bohemia has been for a hundred years a figure of speech. Is the figure an allegory, a myth perhaps embodying a vision; or is it only a stale fiction?

(Charles Sears Baldwin, 1903)⁴

The city is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language: the city speaks to its inhabitants, we speak our city, the city where we are, simply by living in it, by wandering through it, by looking at it.

(Roland Barthes)⁵

The explicit mention of the linguistic effects of spatialization can orient the discussion towards an examination of the relationship which exists between material and symbolic dimensions of music-oriented spaces, the concrete and the imaginative sides of musicmaking in the city. The final framework provides for a thicker description of musical activity in the city by highlighting certain absences of the previous two frameworks, notably, aspects of collective representation. The primary concern here is to

explore the relationship between the representational aspects of the scene, bohemia and the city and their bearing on cultural production, social relations and spatial practice. These connections will be explored by referring to the work of Shields, focusing in particular on his related notions of social spatialization, place-image and myth. Thus, while avoiding the romantic connotations of the term scene by forgoing Shanks' allusion to the semantic disorder of the scene and his direct allusion to earlier models of subcultural practice as noise in the system (Hebdige, 1979), the discursive framework can focus analysis on the ideological, hegemonic aspects of musicmaking that are not covered by either the experiential or materialist framework.

In order to give a better sense of the relationship between discourse and action, the term requires a brief definition. Discourse as a theoretical term with a wide range of meanings, but we can limit ourselves to three for the purposes of this discussion.

Discourse, as Ian Angus has put it, refers to a

space for discussion and debate in which many (often competing) positions are possible.... A discourse is structured by what one might call, in a diagrammatic metaphor, 'axes' that define a realm of reference points from which arguments can be made. Thus it allows for disagreement and debate even while it structures these disagreements in relation to each other, and it ensures that the different speakers are speaking about "the same thing" even when they disagree.

(Ian Angus, 1999: 28)

This has something of the quality of Foucault's "discursive formations," with an emphasis on the structural aspects of discourse as something produced socially through institutions. More generally, it can be said that "discourse is the force that observes, reflects, and channels energies in social process" (Gottdiener, 1995: 70), which links discourse more explicitly with desire (for control, containment), but socializes it in a way

that suggests both individual and collective regulation and constraint. In a more explicit sociopolitical sense, discourse

...refers to language in use, as a process which is socially situated. However... we may go on to discuss the constructive and dynamic role of either spoken or written discourse in structuring areas of knowledge and the social and institutional practices which are associated with them. In this sense, discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon worlds, a means which both constructs and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds, and in so doing both reproduces and constructs afresh particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the overarching social formation.

(Candlin, 1997: ix, cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2000: 3)

Discourse will be referred to here as an acceptable and legitimate vocabulary, one which, as Angus states, has spatial consequences (channeling and regulating the social action, as Gottdiener claims), but which, as Candlin notes, is socially situated; in fact, it determines a range of actions which take the form of material consequences, cultural practices and social forms.

Speaking more generally, at the level of discourse it becomes difficult to separate the material and symbolic from the ideological. They are inter-related in ways that manifest themselves in deeply conscious and unconscious ways. In describing the relationship of people to places, Shields employs the term *social spatialization*, by which he means the “social construction of the spatial which is a formation of both discursive and non-discursive elements, practices and processes” (1991: 7). These processes and practices aid the formation of a place’s character, suggestions alluded to by Barthes in his framing of the city itself as a discourse. The character of a place, Shields suggests, depends heavily upon intersubjectivity whereby “any habitually interacting group of people convey character to the place they occupy which is immediately apparent to an

outsider, though unquestioned and taken-for-granted by habitués” (16). How are these meanings shared?, he asks. Through socialization or through labeling is the reply.

Shields refers to Bachelard’s and Tuan’s use of *topophilia*—the affective relationship with space which lends an emotional charge to a specific place—in an effort to explore this notion more fully (29). He expands his definition of spatialization to incorporate a social dimensions, noting that it

designate(s) the ongoing social construction of the spatial at the level of the social imaginary (collective mythologies, presuppositions) as well as interventions in the landscape (for example, the built environment). This term allows us to name an object of study which encompasses both the cultural logic of the spatial and its expression and elaboration in the language and more concrete notions, constructions and institutional arrangements.

(31)

Linking this to Foucault’s notion of discursive practices which are “characterized by the partitioning of a field of objects, by the definition of legitimate perspective for the subject of knowledge, and by fixing norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories” suggests that certain elements form the legitimate content of discourse (cited in Shields, 41-42). How this functions socially is based on a related notion also forwarded by Foucault: *dispositif* (often translated as “apparatus”). As a kind of conceptual apparatus, as a “grid of intelligibility,” the *dispositif* fits neatly into Shields conception of spatialization which he suggests “ground(s) a cultural edifice of perceptions and prejudices, images of places and regions, and to establish performative codes which relate practices and modes of social interaction to appropriate settings” (46).

Spatialization manifests itself in everyday life through conversation topics in that images of places and regions are often cited and commented upon (i.e. discourses on space). It is a means to express ideas—an intellectual shorthand whereby spatial

metaphors and place images can convey a complex set of associations without the speaker having to think too deeply and to specify exactly which associations or images he or she intends (46):

The manner in which spatialization is most visible is in spatial practices and in the connotations people associate with places and regions in everyday talk. One notices the spatial metaphors people use, but it is when people attribute certain characteristics to a place and then make a decision—such as whether or not to go there—on this basis that talk becomes deed.... Such place-images come about through over-simplification (i.e. reduction to one trait), stereotyping (amplification of one or more traits) and labeling (where a place is deemed to be of a certain nature). Places and spaces are hypostatized from the world of real space relations to the symbolic realm of cultural significations. Traces of these cultural place-images are also left behind in the litter of historical popular cultures: postcards, advertising images, songs, lyrics and in the settings of novels. These images connected with place may even come to be held as signifiers of its essential character. Such a label further impacts on material activities and may be clung to despite changes in the ‘real’ nature of the site.

(47)

Place-images and myths are two terms Shields uses to describe the means through which the city is often rendered legible, a semiotic metonym which functions to economically represent the city to its citizens and to others. They form part of the repertoire of spatial practices which follow from Lefebvre’s definition (cited above). Through various modes of representation, certain sets of meaning begin to accrue to the city revealing how place-making and meaning-making are linked, even at an imaginative, and perhaps illusory, or, even more pointedly, ideological level:

These are various discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality. Images, being partial and often either exaggerated or understated, may be accurate or inaccurate. They result from stereotyping, which over-simplifies groups of places within a region, or from prejudices towards places or their inhabitants. A set of core images forms a widely disseminated and commonly held set of images of a place

or space. These form a relatively stable group of ideas in currency, reinforced by their communication value as conventions circulating in a discursive economy.... Collectively a set of place-images forms a place myth. Thus, there is both a constancy and a shifting quality to this model of place- or space-myths as the... images change slowly over time, are displaced by radical changes in the nature of place, and as various images simply lose their connotative power, becoming 'dead metaphors,' while others are invented, disseminated, and become accepted in common parlance.
(1991: 60-61)

Place-images stand in as a kind of shorthand, reducing the complexity of a particular place to a standard or convenient set of associations. The dense sets of signifiers associated with urban places, their polysemy, are rendered manageable through place-images: "Place-images come about through over-simplification (i.e., reduction to one trait), stereotyping (amplification of one trait) and labeling (where a place is deemed to be of a certain nature). Places and spaces are hypostatized from the world of real space relations to the symbolic realm of cultural significations" (47). This abstraction, or metonymic function, of place-image is evident in discussion of city's and their various scenes. The Seattle scene, the Manchester scene, the Dunedin scene, have formed part of the shorthand lexicon used to describe the mythical dimensions associated with musicmaking in the city. Of central concern here is the relationship of the set of signifiers that make up the image of the city to those material and symbolic practices which are part of musicmaking in the city, a relationship about which provocative questions might then be posed: What sorts of narratives do scene or bohemia institute which perform this valuable social function? What sorts of myths serve to lend the city its aura? Are not scenes and bohemias primary vehicles for mythmaking in the city? How is the vitality of the scene or a bohemian ambience figured as a kind of index (of sociality, of creativity/productivity)? The discursive framework allows insight into these

sorts of questions, mainly by considering the role the representation of a scene/bohemia (or a city) plays in shaping urban perceptions, conceptions and attitudes. How myths serve to organize social space, how social distinctions unfold spatially as inflected by biased images of a city or scene, is an important component of place-images and myths in the sense that behaviour and attitudes are often shaped by these representations:

We also organize our lives around spatial routines around spatial and territorial divisions. These surface as the carriers of central social myths which underwrite ideological divisions between classes, groups and regions. Spaces, fields of homogeneity, are conventionally subdivided into significant nodes and points: places.

(Shields: 47)

Shields echoes DeCerteau in this respect, as the latter also addresses these sorts of questions in his discussion of the spatial qualities of stories. Stories, which include narratives and myths, “carry out the labour that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places” (DeCerteau, 1988:118). They are one device, among many, which people employ to ground themselves to particular places, to spatialize experience.

In her detailed study of the music scene in Milton Keynes, Finnegan’s concept of “pathways” touches on this notion of place-making, evident in her anthropological description of the routinization of musical space which occurs mainly through material practice and symbolic means (Finnegan: 1989). However, what her study lacks is a more detailed analysis of how certain places acquire their affective dimensions and how these places then take on qualities of distinctiveness (that is: how is social difference articulated and how does it play out spatially?). Her work is more concerned with the results of spatialization as a means of managing the abstract and alienated aspects of urban space through specific sociomusical practices. It tells us little about how a place’s

identity or character comes into being, how place-images and myths serve as a binding agent or divisive force, or how its social relations are structured according to a variety of competing and/or complementary forces such as economics, politics, language, etc. As a result her study somewhat obscures a number of determining factors which otherwise structure the sociomusical experience.

The symbolic aspects of Finnegan's work are still germane here, however. They can be expanded to consider the deeper sociospatial consequences of how discourse and image must be located within a matrix of symbolic and material processes which serve to organize both spatial expression and social behaviour. Spatialization operates at both a material and symbolic level and remains a significant part of the process by which spaces become places, a process which is never divorced from larger forces:

Spatialization has a mediating effect because it represents the contingent juxtaposition of social and economic forces, forms of social organization, and constraints of the natural world and so on. But as a 'cause,' in and of itself, it plays no role for it is not a locus of causal forces. Human agents have causal power.... (T)he spatial has a channeling effect. But, objects may have specific causal forces only because they are 'spatialized' in a certain arrangement. Spatialization is 'causative' in the sense that it expresses or channels causation like that class of verbs such as 'persuade' which might express causal relationships in language: someone's words might be 'persuasive,' but it is the person who is 'doing' the persuading, not the words themselves.

(Shields, 1991: 57)

The channels that Shields describes are substantiated through "spatialization," part of the process whereby factors such as social difference, intentionality, and economic forces are aligned in such a way that they mutually inform one another. Shields has elsewhere developed, in more detail, his notion of "sociospatialization," particularly as it shapes the social imaginary and individual behaviour:

In social spatialization, spaces are not only overcoded, but physical space itself is “produced” via classification schemes with various (ideological) divisions as good and bad areas...; our and theirs; this place and that place; space and places for this and that.... This production of space also concerns social and cultural reproduction. People learn the comportment associated with their gender and “know their place in society”.... Ideologies and cosmologies are reproduced through the tutoring of outlook via images of community, nation and world.... A complex of spatial practices and conceptual assumptions guides, for example, not only the production of the environment and landscape in terms of social norms regarding the allocation of functions and activities to their appropriate spaces, but also the practical use and inhabitation of the resulting spatialization.

(1997: 192)

How the city is perceived and conceived, then, is tightly bound up with how certain spaces are used. More importantly, spatialization is the way in which certain hierarchies are constituted within social spaces, as it maps the social order in terms of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. Spatialization is the process by which those distinctions are reproduced, externally through myths, but also internally, by the bodily and embodied responses to representations of place. How one moves about as well as directs their activity in the city is bound up with processes of spatialization.

Much like Harvey uses Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus to account for how individuals orient themselves in space (in an arrangement tied explicitly to social class), Shields uses it to explain how sociospatialization is played out at the level of social activity:

As a cognitive and practical habitus social spatialization is a source not only of “templates” or algorithms (traditional routines) but of allegorical solutions (attempting to solve new problems by metaphorically assimilating them to older difficulties, differentiating images ... and conceptual shortcuts (attributing stereotypical qualities to a person from a given place or region). The linkage between the production of culture, social reproduction and the production of a whole social spatialization is of central

importance. Cultural hegemony is reinscribed upon the physical landscape to 'haunt' what Bourdieu (1972) has called *habitus*.
(ibid)

And as spatialization is a "superstructural" element which in action assumes the status of a material element of the "base," (ibid), myth's links with ideology are made more evident. The ideological function of myth is inextricably linked with the material, economic base of the city:

We here encounter the fact that spatial and temporal practices can themselves appear as 'realized myth' and so become an essential ideological ingredient to social reproduction. The difficulty under capitalism, given its penchant for fragmentation and ephemerality in the midst of the universals of monetization, market exchange, and the circulation of capital, is to find a stable mythology expressive of its inherent values and meanings. Social practices may invoke certain myths and push for certain spatial and temporal representations as part and parcel of their drive to implant and reinforce their hold on society.

(Harvey, 1995: 216-217)

Scene and bohemia are the ideal vehicles for the production of certain myths, particularly as they allows claims to be made for authentic uses of space and authentic spaces. For many musicmakers, this is a situation that fosters the production of certain narratives which confirm their resilience. The symbolic dimensions of the scene and the imaginative structures of bohemia are motivated by numerous desires feeding a social imaginary which rests upon myths of all sorts in order to gain its affective purchase on musicmakers.

The social imaginary of the city gains some of its affective purchase courtesy the attributes associated with musicmaking spaces. For scenes, the fact that they come and go—they follow cycles, they wax and wane—lends them a rhythmic structure, one that unfolds according to an internal logic but is buffeted also by external forces. Through

these rhythms, the links forged between specific times and specific places, the cycles of the city are brought together in a manner which imparts to the place of musicmaking its affective and symbolic depth. Bars, performance spaces, places of work, home, rehearsal spaces, etc., are not only physical nodes but affective sites which resonate with musicmakers as providing the emotional charge which confirms their commitment to both the city and musicmaking. Blum again:

We then note the thematic running throughout this imaginative structure that connects space to time through the idea of making it an occasion. This occasioning of the space is part of what we mean by its emplacement, its making space into place. The desire for the scene plays off the collective concern for eventfulness in ways that highlight as a part of the urban experience, the search for renewal through the critical moment. Nothing apocalyptic is implied here for the scene appears integral to the imaginative structure of the city as it strives to make this present a memorable moment, and thus, part its ongoing and revisable biography.

(Blum: 32)

The celebratory and the performative aspects of the scene, occurring as they do in particular places at particular times as “an occasion,” are central to it then relates to the city. It has a powerful imaginative charge which lends the experience of place a meaningful shape and produces a sense of imagined community (Anderson, 1991). The scene exists as a kind of puzzling urban social form, one which is hardly resolvable; yet, its very irresolvability acts as its organizing principle:

The scene is the fundamental ambiguity which its name and connotations arouse in collective life. This is the symbolic order of the scene. And the scene is the myriad course of action directed to solve the problem released by such ambiguity, including the ethical collisions of forms of collectivization which it inspires. This is the imaginative structure of the scene. The scene is both symbolic order and imaginative structure, a locus of collectivization and a catalyst of problem solving in the ways I have described.

(Blum: 33)

The scene, and also bohemia marked as it is by ambiguity, allows a kind of imaginative solution, a way of solving problems and ameliorating tensions found most often in cities (anonymity, loneliness, the “Other,” etc.) and in this sense is not far removed from the “magical solutions,” “making” or “winning space,” introduced by subcultural studies more than two decades ago (see Cohen, Hall, et al., 1976). The discursive dimensions of musical life serve to illustrate how the symbolic aspects of musicmaking complicate any reductive readings of the city/scene/bohemia relationship. Thinking through the discursive framework demonstrates that musicmaking and its spatial products/processes, scene and bohemia, perform a vital function in shaping the urban imaginary. Their social value extends beyond the material or experiential dimensions of musicmaking, with emerging narratives and myths which act as connective tissue binding together an imagined community.

This framework, alongside the experiential and materialist framework, underpins the theoretical elaboration of the material and symbolic dimensions associated with musicmaking. Scene and bohemia, as two spatial expressions of musicmaking, are figured here as robust cultural spaces which function at a number of levels to connect musicmakers to places. Speaking of social space, Lefebvre suggests that it “will be revealed in its particularity to the extent that it ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and mathematicians) on the one hand, and physical space (as defined by practico-sensory activity and the perception of ‘nature’) on the other” (Lefebvre: 27). Notions such as social spatialization, materiality, habitus and discourse form part of a conceptual lexicon which can be used to explore the relationship between musicmaking, scene and bohemia as spatial products and processes. How those

might work themselves through a methodological framework, as concretized in the specific case of Montreal, is taken up in the next chapter.

NOTES

¹ See Skelton and Valentine, 1998

² Mark Gottdiener has commented on the more arbitrary or slippery aspects of this process:

Given the polysemous or multi-coded nature of urban life, the need of some groups for more stable, uniformly conceived representations requires a management of the clash of oppositional environmental typifications. It is important to ask, on the one hand, what the groups are which possess a need for overarching, historically invariant symbols and, on the other, what the mechanisms are that are utilized to achieve ideological hegemony. In the former case, it is apparent that the real estate industry, homeowner associations, chambers of commerce, and banks are the most active managers of symbolic generalizations. Through the actions of these groups the representational typifications are converted into ones which are more useful for the exchange value of property and business investment. However, this is by no means an automatic process of sign conversion. It is contentious and contingent depending as it does on the ability of special interests to control the symbolic interpretations of processual outcomes in everyday life. Signs of boosterism which portray a unified image of the community must be superimposed upon a more fundamental socio-semiotic process involving a politics of signs among contending groups within the city and is rarely achieved with any true effect.

(Gottdiener, 1986: 206-207)

³ Angus, 1997: 3

⁴ Cited in Grana, 1990, 307.

⁵ Barthes, 1986: 97.

Chapter Three

“If Ethnography’s the Answer, What’s the Question?”

The experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks outlined in the last chapter were designed to lend the analysis of scenes and bohemia more conceptual unity, with the aim of realizing the frameworks’ probative value by situating them in relation to urban musicmaking. The intent was to impart to them more theoretical coherence and bring to the fore concepts that would encourage a deeper consideration of the spatial processes associated with musicmaking. With these frameworks in place, the sociomusical experience of the city can be better described in light of the experiential, materialist and discursive dimensions of cultural production in the city. When used in concert, they function to enrich the description of musicmaking’s spatial properties as they are they are both lived and imagined. The main concern here is determining which methodologies would enable a richer examination of musical activity. To this end, there are three principal tasks undertaken in this chapter. The first is geared towards positioning the proposed methodological directions in relation to existing qualitative methods employed in the field of popular music studies. In this respect, this chapter will situate the project in relation to an often-privileged methodology in the study of urban musicmaking, namely ethnography. The second task is to briefly outline the actual research methods; that is, to offer a description of how the research was undertaken in Montreal, highlighting some of the difficulties and pleasures of doing qualitative research in the city. The final task is to outline and expand upon other qualitative methods by addressing their applicability to the study of musicmaking in Montreal. Here the

specificity of Montreal musicmaking will be made more apparent by anchoring the conceptual frameworks to a singular sociomusical experience. The analysis of the ways in which Montreal's musicmaking enunciates its uniqueness, both materially and symbolically, requires a suppler array of methodologies in order better apprehend its manifold articulations.

The manner in which this research project has unfolded is itself bound up in the idiosyncratic nature of musical life in Montreal (a point the discussion of method emphasizes). Doing this kind of research in Montreal required using a medley of research strategies which was uniquely suited to this specific case. What remains to be seen is whether or not the research methods laid out below can open up a variety of research opportunities for the study of urban cultural production beyond musicmaking (or non-urban cultural production, as the case may be). With regard to Montreal musicmaking, this is not to overstate the significance of the research methods and the results. Instead, it is to suggest that this particular research model can be used to broaden the scope of inquiry into a chosen urban sociomusical experience and to figure into its methods a multi-faceted approach as a way of describing its many dimensions. To begin then, a brief interlude into the use of ethnography as a privileged model for the study of musicmaking, followed by an outline of the Montreal case, used here as a counterpoint.

Ethnography and Popular Music Studies

As a sign of the interdisciplinary motivations guiding research in popular music studies, the study of musicmaking has recently taken an interesting, and in some estimations a problematic, turn towards spatial concerns. Even within the blurred genres

of contemporary social research, this turn has engendered discussion as to the merits of doing qualitative research. It is often viewed as a corrective or addendum to other research methods that appear either overly concerned with textual analysis (musicology, for instance), or emphasize too often impersonal institutional practices or abstract historical developments, over that of the much more grounded social and material aspects of everyday musicmaking. Even a cursory sample of books (Bennett, 1999; Cohen, 1991; Finnegan, 1989; Shank, 1994), articles (Cohen, 1993) and edited anthologies (Leyshon, Matless, Revill, 1998; Swiss, Sloop, Herman, 1999) dedicated to popular music studies reveals that the use of ethnography as a methodological tool for examining a range of musical practices has become a privileged part of the field's theoretical and methodological repertoire.

Much of this work is indebted to a longstanding anthropological and sociological tradition. Ethnography's privileged place in both of these fields has been the subject of much debate and interrogation, and its usefulness as a research method has been heavily scrutinized. One particular response has been a subtle re-thinking of its chosen object of study, the "Other," which in turn has engendered a new set of concerns about the position of the researcher in the field. The reconfiguration of ethnographic method along lines that incorporate new self-conscious modes of textualization, and as its practitioners come to grips with an increasingly globalized culture, has meant a profound shift in terms of orientation. The notion of a pure anthropological study has been dispensed with and in its place have come ethnographic projects with a decidedly inward turn, an effort to move the focus away from the Other "out there" to the Other "in here" (and here you can include primers on also autoethnographies).¹ This domestication and repatriation of

ethnography, a refocusing of the anthropological gaze towards the Other just next door, or in the case of autoethnographies on the researcher him or herself, has necessitated a more nuanced methodology. Standard ethnographic tropes such as “making the strange familiar,” and “making the familiar strange,” which can be read as processes of exoticization, must also be reconfigured. As a result, how difference is articulated has to be rethought, and notions of distance (from the field, from the respondents) also have to be recalibrated.

In the wake of sociology and anthropology’s inward turn, it has been suggested that many ethnographers are nowadays more committed to what has been called “deep hanging out” (Rosaldo, cited in Clifford, 1997: 56). This notion of “deep hanging out,” with its vague allusions to a kind of hipsterism and cool, recalls a brand of research with deeper historical roots which wend their way through the canonical literature of the sociology of deviance and outsiders. The phrase bears the traces of the ethnographic sociologies of William Whyte (Street Corner Society, 1970), Howard Becker (The Outsiders, 1963) and others. Mingling with the deviants and the outsiders, at the club with the jazzbos and the taxi-dancers, watching a deal go down with the prostitute, the dealer or the junkie, getting the goods on the mobster’s sordid world; they are all classic ethnographic relationships all recalled in the resonant phrase “hanging out.” With its allusion to a kind of relaxed informality, a casualness and openness marked also by an awareness of the seriousness of the research endeavour, this notion of deep hanging out effectively conveys the kind of laissez-faire looseness, the comfortable and leisurely, but still rigorous, stance required by researchers. It is, as James Clifford says, yet another sign that certain research methods and imperatives have changed:

But even as visiting and “deep hanging out” replace extended co-residence and the tent-in-the village model, legacies of exoticist fieldwork influence the professional habitus of the “field” -- now conceived less as a discrete, other place than as a set of embodied research practices, patterns of discretion, of professional distance, of coming and going.

(Clifford, 1997: 90)

Clifford suggests here that a more flexible approach to the field has emerged, one which requires a more politicized, informed and detailed account of life on and off the field. It is a vision of fieldwork which incorporates institutional and disciplinary demands, and in the context of an intellectual economy, a renewed awareness of the use-value and exchange-value of interpersonal encounters as forming part of a complex hierarchical system. And although it may not directly address the sometimes self-indulgent or self-absorbed perspective of ethnographic method, it suggests the possibility for continued criticism and reconfiguration.

What “hanging out” suggests is the ability to conform to certain social situations, to fit in, to appear natural and at ease. Participant observation is one of the principal field methods used to gather information which takes the notion of *Verstehen*, as empathetic understanding, as an epistemological mode which approaches the ethnographic ideal.² Ethnography becomes, in Bourdieu’s sense of embodiment, a corporeal practice; “hanging out” becomes a set of embodied practices. To fit in, to immerse oneself in a chosen social world, means having the requisite social skills, learning the language and more importantly, the look, attitude and behaviour that allows one ease of entry. Researchers must be able to embody certain cultural competencies, and have the ability to display (and the ability to conceal as well) the kinds of cultural and symbolic capital, in Bourdieu’s sense, which allow them the mobility required to negotiate the field.

Speaking to the notion of habitus, Clifford suggests, “we may find it useful to think of the field as a habitus rather than as a place, a cluster of embodied dispositions and practices” (Clifford 1997: 69). Depending upon a researcher’s particular intellectual or cultural capital (a level of cultural competency and knowledge that allows them to move more or less freely within and between fields) it determines the ability to “hang out” effectively, as well as how efficiently and effortlessly the transition between field of research and the academic field can be managed. An awareness of how the habitus functions to map social power onto the field, denotes also the processes of discrimination at work. As Clifford notes, the process of selection, the journey to the field as well as the journey back are rarely discussed in ethnographic studies. The moments before and after one enters the field are rife with decisions, negotiation and compromises. How these matters are resolved, how fields are evaluated, rarely are these aspects considered in any detail.

The study of musicmaking puts many of these issues into stark relief. At the same time it also introduces other concerns. A decade ago, Sara Cohen wrote “Ethnography and Popular Music Studies,” in which she stated that “ethnography would increase our knowledge of the details of popular music processes and practices” (Cohen, 1993: 135). In her book Rock Culture in Liverpool (1995) she reiterates this claim: “What is particularly lacking in the literature (about rock music) is ethnographic data and microsociological detail” (6). This is a valid criticism and one which has been addressed in the expanding body of literature which has lately emerged around scenes and subcultures. More germane to this discussion, however, is Cohen’s argument for the

value of ethnography as a potential life-altering experience (one which can certainly raise issues about the self-indulgent impulses of researchers):

An ethnographic approach to the study of popular music, involving direct observation of people, their social networks, interactions and discourses, and participation in their day-to-day activities, rituals, rehearsals and performances, would encourage researchers to experience different relationships, views, values and aesthetics, or to view familiar contexts from an alternative perspective. This exercise could increase self-awareness and challenge pre-conceived notions or 'ungrounded' assumptions.

(1993: 135)

This is a bold prescription for popular music researchers. There are certain kinds of life-lessons that can be had in doing ethnographic research, the kind of experiences offered by interpersonal exchange that are absent from other numbers-oriented, empirically-based social sciences. And while this might be overstating the case, there is something in this that allows ethnography to remain appealing, with an existential and sensuous thrill attached to the promise of face-to-face encounters which possibly enrich the researcher's experience and deepen their understanding of even the most mundane everyday activity. It also provides an opportunity for the researcher to reflect upon his or her research motivations. It is this sort of microsociological detailing, with its promise to uncover the nuances of everyday social practices as well as destabilize the researcher's assumptions, that draws the scholar in. It is not a prescription to be taken lightly. Bourdieu states in Homo Academicus (1987) that "(s)ociology can be an extremely powerful instrument of self-analysis which allows one to better understand what he or she is by giving one an understanding of one's own conditions of production and of the position one occupies in the social world" (cited in Wacquant, 1992: 62).

The notion of distance and dialogue are essential components of ethnography as it is understood in anthropology and sociology. Thus, even the partial importation of ethnography from established disciplines into an emergent and still maturing field such as popular music studies offers the possibility of new debates and dialogues. By virtue of its very interdisciplinary nature, popular music studies lacks the sorts of rules, codes, tradition and history that might otherwise lead to a more formalized set of research methods. Because the field is populated by scholars who come from history, sociology, cultural studies, musicology, among other disciplines, the inconsistencies within ethnographic studies have, as a result, more to do with the relative newness of the field and the disparate interests that fall under the purview of popular music studies. These are, in a sense, growing pains, indications of the still nascent field, which can partially explain why the rigours of ethnographic method seem to be applied so haphazardly. What Cohen offers in her appeal to proper ethnographic method in popular music studies is a caveat which is rarely considered in detail: while its previous absence has now been corrected in light of its almost overbearing presence in the field, important aspects of the ethnographic approach are in constant danger of disappearing by being relegated to a brief aside, footnote or appendix. In many studies of musicmaking, the ethnographic method is rarely anything more than a gloss on the research outline. As a result, the larger implications and methodological difficulties associated with it are elided or only partially addressed. Questions about the theoretical efficacy of ethnography—a sub-discipline forming an ever-expanding separate body of literature in anthropology—are rarely taken up in popular music studies. As a result, the ability to enrich certain arguments or case studies of musical and social practice remains unrealized.

The vogue for ethnography in the field of popular music studies is symptomatic of larger shifts happening in the human sciences. Its use in the study of musicmaking, for instance, is marked by an emphasis on the experiential, a dimension absent from musicological studies or cultural histories. These experiences are enunciated in musicmakers' recounting of a particular social experience as it unfolds in relation to what are seen as deeply meaningful acts of cultural expression. As an antidote to rigidly quantitative approaches within the social sciences, qualitative research literally and figuratively fleshes case studies out with respondents' insights artfully arranged in such a way that a field setting can come to life in textual form. François Dosse has called this turn towards humanism a sign of sociology's descriptive turn, a paradigm shift which moves away from the "great unitary paradigms" (Marxism, functionalism, structuralism) towards a "dynamization of the 'workshop of practical reason' and... a 'humanization of the social sciences'" (Dosse, 1999: xvi). It is an interpretive turn insofar as it

aims to bring into evidence the place of interpretation in the structuration of action by revisiting the entire conceptual network, all the semantic categories that belong to action: intentions, wills, desires, motives, sentiments, and so on. Hence the object of sociology passes from the instituted to the instituting and reinvests the objects of the everyday as well as the scattered and various forms of sociality.

(138)

It is marked by a return of the subject, but in a distinct move away from the structuralist paradigm which understood subjectivity strictly in terms of linguistics and which was motivated by a critical act focusing on "the thought of decentering" (133). The older "critical paradigm" was notable for the absence of theories of social action, the result being that this model had "the effect of not taking seriously the claims and competencies of ordinary people, whose words are referred back to the expression of ideological

illusion” (135). Sociality comes to the fore instead. At the same time, its universalizing impulses made it a “global reading code...capable of making the behaviour of all individuals in every situation understandable” (135-136). Here there is a split between different types of knowledge, with practical common sense being pitted against scientific knowledge, with the latter being privileged as more legitimate.

This new paradigm recognizes the value of common sense, of “ordinary knowledge,” as a “repository of knowledges and *savoir faire*” (137). As a descriptive or interpretive turn, it reasserts the value of doing research into social action (Dosse singles out ethnomethodology, but the point is equally relevant to qualitative research generally). As a hermeneutic exercise, it requires that signifying and social practices be understood as acts which individuals understand as social acts. In other words, they understand their actions as motivated in relation to others. Ethnography as interpretive or descriptive work takes these actions as fertile signs which can be translated as having a symbolic value which is meaningful (or in some cases, too full of meaning and thus irreducible to use Willis’ phrase). Ethnography, in this sense, is a management strategy designed to organize and arrange meanings in terms of their social significance:

(It) accords a central position to action endowed with meaning, rehabilitates the intentionality and the justifications of the actors in a reciprocal determination of doing and saying. The social is then no longer conceived as a thing; it is no longer the object of reification, for the actor and observer are both held in a relation of interpretation that implicates intersubjectivity.

(xvi)

The notion of the interpretive turn brings us back to Shank’s definition of the scene as one of semiotic excess (see Chapter Two). Describing scenes in this way suggests the difficulty of accounting for all the possible vectors, trajectories,

determinations, discursive and rhetorical activities which happen in a scene. Here the semiotic richness is almost too much as the scene is overcoded in a such a way that any attempt at accounting for its signifying fecundity is more than likely going to fail or at the very least miss the (many) points. As William James reminds us “experience has a way of boiling over” (James, 1978: 106, cited in Willis, 2000: 2) “Social phenomena are shot through with indeterminacy and open-endedness” (Bohman, cited in Willis, 2000: 8). Ethnography, one of Shank’s preferred modes of inquiry (that and Lacanian theories of subjectivity), is one possible methodological tool which might anchor the semiotic flow in more manageable terms. His text privileges the words of musicians in a way that eloquently maps out the many aspects of the music scene in Austin. It is an attempt to anchor this overabundance of signifiers to words, actions and experiences. It is not without its limitations, but it remains an engaging account of musical and social practice. One might be led to ask here, however, might Shank have been able to describe the musical scene without interviewing the musicians? In terms of interpreting and explaining the activity in a music scene like Austin’s was ethnography the right tool? Or is the question in fact moot? Does it go without saying that nowadays given the “paradigm shift” the only way to study a scene is ethnographically (the default method)? This might be needlessly caricaturing the relationship between ethnography and the study of musicmaking, but it does bring us back to questions about proper and adequate descriptive method.

Shank’s comments can also lead one to consider some of the concerns raised by questions which focus on the usefulness of ethnography, its particular biases and how they can function as strengths and weaknesses in relation to some of the sociological

categories attached to musicmaking. Initial emphasis can be placed on problems relating to microsociological detail and macrosociological relevance. Ethnography can be framed as a means to consider the more banal, but no less interesting, aspects of everyday musical life. By providing a detailed portrait of the prosaic side of musical life, it can give us insight into minutiae which might otherwise go unexplored. However, as Anderson and Sharrock remind us, there is a danger that these moments can be writ too large: “Mundane matters such as casual chat, the perambulation of a tea trolley through a hospital ward, the radio exchange between cab driver and dispatch are to be reviewed as socially awesome events” (Anderson and Sharrock, 1983: 574, cited in Atkinson, 168).

And as Atkinson himself expands on their comments:

Those authors point to the dangers inherent in such a rhetorical device: if everything is a complex and weighty matter, then notions of “complexity” or seriousness lose their force altogether. Nevertheless, the exploitation of such differences remains commonplace in ethnographic sociology, and still retains the possibility of extremely effective argumentation. In the text, therefore, the ethnographer retains the right to shift perspective, in order to compare and contrast the “inside” and “outside,” the esoteric and the exoteric, appearance and reality. Boundaries between social worlds are constructed, only to be breached, while fine gradations and structures are created where none was previously suspected.

(Atkinson, 168)

The construction of these boundaries then should be acknowledged as strategic, in the sense that they can force connections and juxtapositions which might lead to productive tensions and possible reconsiderations of certain established or taken-for-granted aspects of a given social phenomenon.

As a research strategy, this is useful in one sense, but it doesn’t move us much further along in terms of determining the sociological value of doing ethnography. By

framing the ethnographic process in relation to questions of scale, in terms of micro versus macro, it is possible to situate ethnography in relation to other theoretical and/or research paradigms. Macro-analysis, Atkinson and Hammersley remind us, refers to theories that apply to large-scale systems of social relations linking many different settings to one another through causal networks (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1983: 204-206). A micro-analysis works at the level of local forms of social organization (institutions and face-to-face encounters). The authors offer another distinction, substantive versus formal theory (which concerns the generality of certain categories, where more formal categories subsume substantive ones) to which either micro or macro can be correlated. Combined into subsets, there are four broad categories: macro-formal which offers analysis of structure and the development of societies in general; the macro-substantive which is the study of specific societies; the micro-formal which are even more localized studies of social organization (and here he cites Goffman's Presentation of Self as an example); and finally, the micro-substantive which deal with particular types of organization or situations. These are models which can supply the researcher with some notion of scale; that is, they can determine which particular framework would work best in a particular context. In other words, they can offer one way of containing the semiotic excess of scenes or subcultures, framing the material in a manner which seems more manageable. Whether working in the field, doing conversational analysis or looking at institutional contexts, each model supplies a framework for method. However, these are mainly descriptive categories and fail to provide any indication as to what use they might have beyond allowing the researcher to avoid hitting a small research object with a large unwieldy theory.

In terms of using these categories as one strategy for building sociological theories, Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that theorizing along these lines involves narrowing of focus as well as a process of abstraction which gives us a much purer representation of phenomena. If well founded, it can give us more knowledge of aspects of social processes and begin to explain/explore why events occur in the patterned ways they do (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 177). An ethnography which adopts these elements can consider both micro and macrosociological phenomena in relation to one another with the possibility of explaining, however partial or tentative that explanation might be, certain social phenomena. This does not entirely sidestep the problems ethnographies raise. On the one hand, as a way of introducing and then conceptualizing a particular phenomenon, ethnography can prove a useful means of avoiding abstraction, reading phenomena in such a way that it is not entirely divorced from context. On the other hand, it can mean that we lose both theoretical rigour and any claims to verifiability by stressing the particular over the generalizable. But perhaps that is beyond the scope of the ethnographic method, a handicap which leads to a consideration of other qualitative research methods.

Methodological Directions

Not only does the city-dweller develop a sentiment of place gradually, but it is extremely difficult for him even to visualize the physical organization of the city, and, even more, to make sense of its cross-currents of activity. Apparently, an invariable characteristic of city life is that certain stylized symbolic means must be resorted to in order to “see” the city.

(Richard Strauss)³

The value of ethnography in the study of musicmaking should not be understated, as its theoretical salience still obtains in ways which have led to many compelling analyses of musical practice. But there is an impulse, or gesture, contained within ethnographic studies which necessarily privileges the “evidence of experience,” whereby the experiential and evidentiary aspect of musicmaking are often conflated in an unproblematic manner (Scott, 1991). However, there other ways to account for the experiential dimensions of musicmaking, principally by using qualitative and empirical methods which can be brought together in a manner which avoids privileging the notion of experience as the repository of truth. The methods chosen to analyze musicmaking in Montreal included mapping exercises, diaristic accounts of one week of sociomusical activity in the city, a short political economy of musicmaking, as well as a discourse analysis of how the city figures into music-centred cultural production. These approaches, qualitative and quantitative, avoid some of the dilemmas associated with ethnography. They also provoke more compelling depictions of musical activity in the city.

The descriptive and analytical attributes of the following research methods are certainly part of Dosse’s “humanist turn.” Taken together in their interpretive capacity, these methods enable a consideration of the human-scale of musicmaking which does not frame it as a “socially awesome” event, but rather as a set of more prosaic social relations connected to a mode of cultural production which is made up of more colourful, as well as more mundane, practices. The intent here is not to seek some authentic portrait of musicmaking in Montreal, although discourses of authenticity are certainly considered. This project pulls back from any kind of truth claims which this might otherwise imply,

proposing instead to describe the particularities of Montreal musicmaking in light of the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks and under the aegis of the analytical modes adopted here. In outlining a set of research methods and frameworks, it is possible to create a model for analyzing scenes (musical and otherwise). In looking at a specific case like Montreal, it is also possible to stress the specificity of the example, an example whose qualities are particular but at some level also generalizable.

Strauss's comment on stylized responses to the abstract nature of city life can begin to re-orient discussion towards different ways of describing the musicmaking practices which define scene and bohemia. Each, it can be said, has a stylistic dimension which shapes and is shaped by the sociomusical experience of Montreal. In seeing the Montreal anglophone scene and the notion of bohemia as sociospatial phenomena instantiated through musical practice, the theoretical utility of the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks can assist in outlining how musicmaking's sociospatial mechanics are coordinated in relation to the city. This trio of frameworks can put into relief the machinations of the cultural economy which underpins musicmaking in Montreal, defining in greater detail the sociomusical specificities of scene and bohemia in relation to the city. There are a number of terms that help to synthesize some the ideas set forth in this framework model. Charles Landry's work on urban creative milieus, for example, and in particular his view that both hard and soft infrastructures be considered as two components vital to urban cultural production, is one model which links symbol-making to the materiality of the city in a manner which accentuates their reciprocity. This can be placed alongside the notion of cognitive mapping as set forth by Kevin Lynch (and later Frederic Jameson) as a conceptual and methodological tool which can

be used to bring out how musicmaking is conceived of spatially. Discourse analysis tells us more about how certain horizons of urban and sociomusical experience are mediated by the images of Montreal which course through musical practice specifically and city life generally.

There were four principle qualitative methods used to gather data: mapping, journal entries, surveys and interviews. There were a total of twenty-five maps and twelve diaristic accounts of a single week which were used to get a snapshot of musical activity of the city. The experience of anglophones is stressed here, marked as it is by an acute awareness of certain social divisions and cultural distinctions. As the comments on their view of musicmaking in Montreal indicate, many of these distinctions reveal themselves directly and indirectly through musical practice. The pool of respondents was restricted to current musicmakers involved in independent musicmaking (although the history of the scene which follows relied heavily upon interviews conducted with members of Montreal's early independent/punk scene). Using established contacts (the "snowball sample"), along with a random sampling of respondents (taken mainly from the *Montreal Mirror*'s annual SoundCheck survey, but gathered also from contacts made at live shows, bars, CKUT Radio McGill, record shops, as well as through students of mine who are currently involved in the scene), potential interviewees were contacted through email correspondence, phonecalls or face-to-face meetings, with interviews conducted at various places throughout Montreal. Maps were drawn first and journal entries followed. The instructions for the map were left deliberately vague, in order to allow for more creative latitude on the part of the musicmakers themselves. Diary entries followed shortly thereafter, which simply asked people to keep track of their movements

and activities for eight consecutive days. The interviews which were based on these findings and were conducted in an unstructured, informal manner. As to confidentiality, interviewees are identified by first name only, and remain anonymous if that was the preferred option.

A brief account of how the most of the data for this project was obtained should serve as a point of entry to the discussion of Montreal's past and present musicmaking efforts, which will form the core of the remaining chapters. The project extends back to 1997, and finishes in 2003, during which numerous interviews were conducted. A majority of these took place at cafes or restaurants chosen by either myself or the respondent (occasionally, an invitation was extended to conduct the interview at their house). The respondents were given as much site choice as possible. This latitude stems in part from earlier attempts to contact musicmakers, many of whom were hesitant to commit to the project. This hesitation, it became clear, had much to do with the perception that I may have something to do with "the media." When asked about this hesitancy, it was made apparent that "the media," the scene's "Other," poses a resounding paradox for many musicmakers: they need the support (to promote gigs and albums, build careers) but recognize that they are at the mercy of deadlines, word counts, and hence, misrepresentation.. Hence, in some cases, I had to be "vetted" by a mutual friend, who would contact the potential respondent and who would then get in contact with me. These interviews proved the most intriguing, not so much for their content, but more for raising questions about what kinds of motivations and perceptions guide the sharing of local musical knowledge.

The actual process of organizing the musicmakers according to schedules and deadlines was, not unexpectedly, an often cumbersome task. As one respondent put it, when asked if they would like to be involved in another phase of the project “I’ll do what I can. And now you understand how hard it is to motivate musicians in Montreal.” The lack of response among musicmakers was compensated for in different ways. In many cases, a specific respondents’ generosity came through, allowing me access to a great deal of ephemerae, which proved more than helpful. In fact, it became apparent that there were different kinds of investment in the scene, many of which were not explicitly musical. A number of people (and not just musicmakers) had been, and still are, assembling ad-hoc archives, gathering zines, posters, cassettes, singles, LPs, etc. It was also clear that there were networks emerging for sharing this information, with one respondent dedicating his front room to building as thorough a Montreal archive as space, access and the availability of material would permit. Much of the following research is heavily indebted to their contributions, which extended from the sharing of personal anecdotes and the elaboration of conspiracy theories, to the occasional lament for people who’d moved on or passed away, and to the donation of collections of alternative weeklies and obscure cassettes, 7-inch singles and LPs. Given the ephemeral nature of so much Montreal independent musicmaking, access to zines, weeklies, demo cassettes, 7-inch singles and other material, followed by in-depth reminisces of what those objects signified, proved crucial to this study. The custodians of this ephemerae were keenly aware of the historical and cultural value of something which would otherwise be relegated to the dustbin of history. Their willingness to share demonstrated a deep sense of commitment to Montreal musicmaking (and along the way, I’ve amassed a small

library of Montreal-related material, much of it on loan, a great deal donated). At those points when I was invited into someone's home, these moments of "deep hanging out" provided some of the most absorbing and satisfying aspects of researching the scene.

Perhaps most importantly, the mere existence of much of this material helps to emphasize that Montreal musicmaking matters for a number of people, even if that significance finds its sole expression in the dusty domestic archive. The artifactuality of musicmaking in Montreal, its materiality, helps conjure up memories and experiences which make the city meaningful. Their significance echoes even today for many of these ad-hoc archivists. Musicmaking would surely continue without these efforts, but the value of history, the attention to musical minutiae even in its most esoteric and idiosyncratic forms, can hardly be overstated. The social persistence of the scene, as Blum has said, finds intimate expression in these small, personal gestures of accumulation, preservation and cataloguing. Zines lovingly preserved in protective plastic sleeves, the doubling up of singles and albums, one copy for play, the other sealed (a mute witness to a musical moment now passed), handbills carefully folded and pressed within bound volumes of alternative weeklies, all carry with them the gravity associated with socially meaningful events, allocating an historical weight, "cultural ballast," to otherwise forgotten or neglected moments (McCracken, 1988; Straw, 2001). This sense of personal and shared history helps to illuminate a much more complex portrait of musicmaking in Montreal.

Situating the research data in relation to the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks can reveal a great deal about Montreal musicmaking. It can also demonstrate the various ways in which attachment to place, to others, and to a place-

image and its attendant mythology, are intimately connected. The multiple perspectives these research methods require can be combined to portray the complexities of the sociomusical experience of Montreal. The direct and indirect ways in which musicmaking relates to the city also became apparent when framed according to these conceptual frameworks. As the research methods also made clear, musicmaking unfolds according to a specific image of Montreal and this relation, between representation and cultural practice, and in turn frames a particular experience of the city. To this end, this chapter describes how research methods such as mapping and diaristic accounts of activity might lend the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks more analytical substance and account for Montreal musicmaking's many valences.

Maps

In order to describe the way in which Montreal is conceived of in musical terms, it might be more productive to consider the orientation of individuals in relation to sociospatial mapping, a strategy which can get at the “grids of intelligibility” (Foucault) musicmakers use to make sense of Montreal. There are two models of social mapping which are germane to discussions of social and cultural space: cognitive mapping, associated originally with the work of Kevin Lynch and, twenty years later, Frederic Jameson; and a variation of this which takes the form of meaning maps, described in book-length detail by Peter Jackson (1989), among others. As to the former mapping technique, Lynch first put cognitive mapping forward in nascent form in his book The Image of the City (1961), which outlined in detail the function of cognitive geography as it shapes the relationship of people to places. He found that the maps drawn by his

respondents indicated five general “building blocks,” around which they based their image of the city: nodes, paths, districts, edges and landmarks. In particular, he stressed the movement of people through urban spaces, noting their reliance upon a semiotic understanding of place which itself was rooted in the sensual (but predominantly visual) experience of place. As such, his study describes processes of signification and their relationship to meaningmaking in the city as it is both imagined and experienced.

There have been numerous critiques and modifications of Lynch’s work, some of which employ the concept of cognitive mapping as part of their methodology (notably Goodey, 1971, but also, more recently, Favro, 1996; Hale, 2002).⁴ It was also employed by Jameson in a discussion of multinational capital, where, in describing cognitive mapping, he notes that Lynch’s notions of mapping is primarily pre-cartographic, in the sense that they are really itineraries and not maps proper (at least as commonly defined). These are images of the contemporary city which stand as responses to its alienating and abstract qualities, those strategies which render the city “legible” according to Lynch, by which he means “the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern.” (Jameson, 1984: 2-3). They are also orientation techniques which serve to organize the city both spatially and temporally for musicmakers, indicating the manner in which routes and routines play out in everyday life. These itineraries can only be partial maps, for a fuller cognitive map, says Jameson, “requires the co-ordination of existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with un-lived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality” (Jameson, 1990: 53).

Jameson adds to Lynch’s model an Althusserian understanding of ideology in order to determine how it shapes the social experience of place. “This is exactly what the

cognitive map is called upon to do in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city,” he suggests. That is it “enable(s) a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society’s structures as a whole” (Jameson, 1991: 51). Elsewhere, he has accentuated this theme, but with the intent of giving it more political purpose:

The conception of cognitive mapping proposed here therefore involves an extrapolation of Lynch’s spatial analysis to the realm of social structure, that is to say, in our historical moment, to the totality of class relations on a global (or should I say multinational) scale. The secondary premise is also maintained, namely, that the incapacity to map socially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience. It follows that an aesthetic of cognitive mapping in this sense is an integral part of any socialist political project.

(Jameson, 1988, 353, cited in Hale, 2002: 32)

There is a great deal of theoretical value in the model Jameson wants to put forward here. Certainly the notion that subjectivity is formed in relation to a spatialized conception of ideology is a significant addition to Lynch’s model of urban experience.

Posed in many respects as a necessary modification to cognitive mapping, maps of meaning gained a certain currency through the work of Stuart Hall, et al, and their study of subcultures (although a generally ignored aspect of their work). The concept was later employed by Peter Jackson in a book-length analysis which took “meaning maps” as its title (1995). Mark Gottdiener, among others, has suggested that although cognitive mapping has its advantages, “it only provides partial understanding of the role the image of the city plays in urban behaviour by depending upon intra-subjective judgements related to perception” (Gottdiener, 9). The result is that a theory such as Lynch’s relies too heavily upon visual perception and neglects the theorization of agency, which in turn leads to descriptions of urban sites that have individuals looking

remarkably, as Raymond Ledrut suggests, like mice running around a maze. The implicit criticism here is that in its reliance on vision's role in adapting to the urban environment, the psycho-biological model put forward by Lynch fails to account for any affective connection to place, ignoring at the same time the symbolic dimensions of the city-image (see Gottdiener, 1986; Ledrut, 1973).

Meaning maps give a better sense of the affective, emotional inter- and intra-subjective relationship to place. As Gottdiener suggests, research into the human organization of the urban environment reveals that the dominant mode of how it is understood is one based on functionality, an understanding of urban place rooted specifically in people's experience and role in that place (Gottdiener: 9). "What they do there," and the relation these social acts play in the symbolic worlds they create are the dominant modes of understanding place (ibid.). However, as Gottdiener claims,

the underlying assumption of cognitive mapping research is that a mental image of the environment provides support for behaviour in the city. Consequently, the understanding of urban activities comes through the identification of mental maps.... (T)he importance of this work is its conceptual break from previous approaches to urban behaviour which hypothesized the presence of rational, utilitarian mechanisms of individual decision-making.

(ibid)

However, the move from subjectively held images of the city to more group-based analysis stalls as it becomes clear that the image of the city is not simply an aggregate or conglomeration of individually held conceptions of the city. The value of the "social basis for urban imaging" remains an area which could be further explored. Based as it is upon the "constructivist assumption," it suggests that the city is imaged differently by different people at different times. This in turn recalls Tuan's idea that the

conception of the urban environment, “a social product,” is something that must be learned (Gottdiener, 10): Citing G. Moore, Gottdiener continues:

Recent evidence from sociology and social geography indicates that different social and cultural groups conceive of the environment in entirely different ways, that is, that to explain differences in environmental cognition, three of the most important constellations of explanatory variables may be social group values, lifestyle and culture.

(Moore, 1983: 36, cited in Gottdiener, 10)

If the goal is the explanation of urban behaviour, one of the necessary questions we need to be reminded of is that posed by Martin Krampen in a study of urban images (in relation to the built environment): “What kind of meaning is connected to the city and by what kind of mechanisms?” (1979: 2); or, to follow from Hubert Damisch: “What is the nature indissolubly, of the city as reality, as image, and as symbol?” (Damisch, 2001: 19). As the experiential framework suggests, the scene is one vehicle through which the city is understood and acquires a limited range of meanings which are based on a combination of existentialist, materialist and symbolic factors which shape urban experiences. The use of mapping-techniques, specifically the graphic representation of place by musicmakers, raises interesting questions about the relationship of the musicmaking to the city.

Why is mapping an ideal opportunity to explore the relationship of musicmaker to place, of scene and bohemia to city? Tuan expands the parameters of the question:

Drawing maps is indubitable evidence of the power to conceptualize spatial relations. It is possible to find one’s way by dead reckoning and through long experience with little attempt to picture the overall spatial relations of localities. If an attempt is made to conceptualize, the result may remain mental rather than being transcribed into a material medium. What occasions call for a map?

(Tuan, 199: 77)

Thus, if the scene is indeed an occasion, as Blum claims it is, it is certainly one which calls out for some sort of map. As to the value of mapping over ethnography, Tuan suggests that mapping a social space is perhaps more valuable than asking someone to describe it verbally:

One can...try to describe the route and the nature of the terrain verbally, but this is always difficult for language is better suited to the narration of events than to the depiction of simultaneous spatial relations.

(ibid)

In order to get some sense of how musicmaking is conceived of spatially, in non-narrative form, the respondents were asked to plot significant sites in the Montreal scene by drawing maps. Individual maps provided scenic detail and provide insight into the sociospatial aspects of musicmaking in Montreal (a sample of the maps drawn appear in Chapter Five). Asking them to think about the scene graphically meant asking them to represent Montreal's musicmaking practices in a way they rarely do. As is evident from the maps themselves, the way in which the scene is understood (by genre, by history, by linguistic makeup) reflects the differing ways of conceptualizing not only the scene but the city itself.

Diaries

As a complement the maps, and as a way of getting at the relationship between the spatial aspects of musical rituals and routines, a selection of musicmakers were asked to keep a journal documenting their movements for one shared week (see Appendix 1). The routes taken by musicmakers, when considered in both their graphical and diaristic forms lent the cartographies of the scene a sense of personally-biased richness. This

resulted in a more detailed sense of musicmaking's spatial co-ordinates, as people documented their movements, to take one example, from their apartment on the Plateau (which may also double as a rehearsal space), to a chance encounter with a fellow musicmaker during which plans were solidified to meet up at a restaurant (the Casa) later on. The diaries flesh out the more schematic aspects of the maps, while lending some personal significance to the more mundane, quotidian aspects of Montreal's musical life, a behind-the-scenes aspect of musicmaking too often neglected in studies which otherwise privilege more expressly music-centered activity (rehearsals, studio time, performances).

Even in their most tedious, mundane moments, these diaristic accounts of a week of musicmaking in Montreal suggest a great deal about the kinds of commitment to practice and place. One respondent, Lorraine, offered a very detailed account of engineering sound for live acts, complete with personal commentary, is evidence of her longstanding investment in musicmaking; record label owners Ian and Eric's comments accentuate the more matter-of-fact tasks associated with the manufacture and promotion of music; the points of overlap (she was doing the soundcheck for another respondent, Greg, show on Tuesday) reveal how established musicmakers are tied to up-and-coming musicmakers, but not in any explicit mentor/apprentice relationship. Some of these accounts took the opportunity to offer some self-reflexive insights into the scene and their role in it. Lorraine's comments on being a female "soundman" are particularly telling. Taken together, these diaries illustrate the variety of activity undertaken among just a small sample of Montreal musicmakers. There are a variety of roles adopted here (some of which assume a certain kind of audience reading these entries), and a number of

orientations and motivations which guide behaviour and attitudes in the context of musicmaking specifically and Montreal generally.

A principle goal of the diary accounts and map-making was, in this respect, to document how ritual connects with place—that is, how places are ordered through routine and ritual and how axes of differentiation, borders and boundaries, are concretized through these practices. In this sense, one might glean from the repetitive and ordered nature of these movements a sense of musicmaking's irrepressible sociality. The intent was also to get a sense of the rhythm of Montreal musicmaking, in order to provide an impression of how it was temporally ordered. Maps of the Montreal scene provided outlines, albeit idiosyncratic ones, of the sociomusical experience, but also gave a clearer sense of how the scene is conceived, and not simply perceived, by musicmakers. The maps themselves demonstrate the variety of conceptions of the city held by musicmakers. Beyond the difference in attention of detail in the crafting of maps, the commentary is perhaps their most telling feature.

Using the maps, diaries and interviews as guides, it was easier to demonstrate that any creative milieu is structured by the interplay of material and symbolic forces. For instance, the maps gave a schematic view of Montreal musicmaking's hard infrastructure, specifically sites such as studios, rehearsal spaces, domestic spaces and performance spaces which underpin musical activity (and extend, more importantly, beyond an emphasis on the performance as musicmaking's end product). The hard infrastructure in Montreal is made up of the built environment, educational institutions (McGill, Concordia, UQAM), meeting places (Casa del Popolo, cafés such as Open Da Night) performance venues (Casa, Sala Rossa, Barfly, L'X, Jupiter Room, Hotel 2 Tango,

various ad hoc performance spaces, including lofts and galleries), bars (Biftek, the Miami, the Copacabana, all on St. Laurent), studios (Mom and Pop Studios, but this can also include home recording studios as well), pressing plants, rehearsal spaces, and post offices. These are often taken by scholars to be peripheral aspects of the scene, yet their presence lends musicmaking in Montreal its greater sense of sociability, extended as it is through the daily activities which are often construed as peripheral to musicmaking. As Landry reminds us, the soft infrastructure is composed of “the associative structures and social networks, connections, human interactions that encourages the flow of ideas between individuals and institutions” (Landry, 133). The hard infrastructure in turn has significant bearing on the soft infrastructure, that is, the affective dimensions associated with the sociomusical experience of Montreal, a fact which was apparent in the diaries (and more pronounced, as we’ll see, in the interviews). In many ways, soft infrastructure can be read as a facet vital to the city’s social imaginary, but it should not be read as a simple reflection of the hard infrastructure. The relationship is not simply a causal one, for as the case of anglo-musicmaking Montreal demonstrates, the hard and soft infrastructure associated with musicmaking figure prominently in the symbolic frameworks and material practices of musicmakers, in a manner that indicates that the city, its identity, bohemian ambience and scenic shape are mutually constituted. Landry reminds us that the successful combination of these sorts of criteria, (and we can include here the cross-subsidization of musicmaking courtesy the kind of “institutional thickness” Amin and Thrift (1994) describe, and which derivative records exemplifies), is contingent upon an amenable social atmosphere. “This thickness,” he notes, “is what continues to stimulate entrepreneurship and consolidates the local embeddedness of

industry while at the same time fostering relations of trust, exchange of information and urban ‘buzz’” (Landry, 141). In Montreal, this institutional thickness comes courtesy institutions such as CBC Radio, community radio (CKUT Radio McGill, CISR, etc.), alternative weeklies (*The Mirror, Hour, Ici and Voir*), industrial links such as the distributor Cargo Records, the various funding agencies which support musical activity, as well as the city’s four universities (three of them located downtown) which provide entry points into the city’s cultural life for many young adults. In Montreal, the two infrastructures are often understood to be somewhat asymmetrical (the hard infrastructure usually taken to be quite weak or fragile). The symbiotic relationship that exists between the hard and soft infrastructures associated with musicmaking, with a stress placed by musicmakers on their unevenness, means that Montreal can figure in the imaginations and musical activities of many musicmakers as a model space in which to be culturally productive. The “buzz” generated by the unevenness of hard and soft infrastructure identified by Montreal musicmakers indicates that the city, its identity, its ambience, and its semiotic shape, are bound up with one another in ways which profoundly affect people’s connection with one another and the place itself (a point taken up in more detail in the following chapters).

What might the relationship of hard to soft infrastructures tell us about the role of representation as a means of anchoring the social worlds of musicmaking? The cultural apparatus underpinning any act of musicmaking should be understood as a matrix of sites, routines, networks, practices, events and participants, a complex of activities and actors in other words that produce discursive frameworks notable, as John Street suggests, for their emphasis on “place-ness” (Street, 1995). Taken together, they produce

regional identities that are coded in specific ways. Where bands come from and where they produce their music often determines how they register in the imaginations of fans and musicmakers. For instance, the Olympia, Seattle, Dunedin and Manchester scenes are all signifiers that draw explicit links between the urban referent and a set of associations that evoke the image of a vibrant subcultural hub. Mitchell Akiyama, a local electronic musician who also runs a record label, emphasizes this point:

Given the amount of influential and just plain hot music that's come out of this city in the last few years, I think it's pretty safe to say that it's one of the more name-checked cities in indie music, in just about any genre too. It probably has helped us - people use geography as an identifier. It doesn't matter whether a city has a "sound" or not. If a guy in Berlin can say, "Oh, that's that Montreal label with that guy from Montreal," it's one more point of familiarity.

(Mitchell Akiyama)⁵

The scene and its bohemian ambience are, as was suggested previously, an index of the city's creative potential, a sign of the city's "cityness" to borrow from Massey (1998). Spatially coded in this way, city-as-sign and city-as-scene are often conflated in a manner that privileges an aesthetic experience of, and commitment to, the city. Many bands and their music are understood by fans and artists alike to be deeply connected with specific places, a sign of their unwavering allegiance to an ideology of small-scale production, a deep sense of commitment to their region's underground, and an awareness of their role as bearers of its subterranean values. There is in this a kind of moral economy that emerges, significant for the way in which an ethics of commitment, to both a sense of place and other musicmakers, is articulated. This particular economy, and the evaluative mechanisms according to which it operates, exemplifies the ways in which fans, bands, labels and various media construct, according to John Street, a particular

rhetoric through discourses of locality (Street, 1995). Discourses informing Montreal musical practices are determined in part by a number of conflicting social, institutional and material practices that affect the scene, in turn shaping how its members construct localness, how a scene or bohemia gains its semiotic shape, and thus, how musicmaking and the city acquire their meaningful, or affective, dimensions. Perhaps more importantly, the sociomusical experience of city life is one way in which a structure of feeling associated with a specific place finds itself so forcefully articulated. This is complicated in Montreal, for numerous respondents often referred to an “elsewhere” when describing the appeal of the city (one respondent compared Montreal to “Paris between the wars”; another “as Casablanca, where worlds collide temporarily”). Considering all these factors, how might we begin to map all of these elements onto the various frameworks? Or more pointedly, how might the frameworks operate in tandem as a way to get at the relationship between the hard and soft infrastructure of Montreal? How might Montreal’s bohemian “structure of feeling,” its “buzz” and ambience, be adequately taken into account as a determining factor in musicmaking?

Spatial practices, spatial representations and representations of space can be proffered as concepts which might point towards possible answers. In alluding to the spatial dimensions of musicmaking, there is perhaps a much broader way to conceive of answers to these questions. There is here something of what Blum means by the “project,” or at least something of a “projection” (Blum, 33), which is forged out of spatially oriented motivations, deliberations and intentions. In a related sense, Michael Dear in a discussion of spatial theory, explains that

(s)ocial relations exist to the extent that they possess a spatial expression: they project themselves into space, becoming inscribed

there, and in the process producing that space itself. Thus, social space is both a *field* of action and a *basis* for that action.

(Dear, 1997: 56)

In terms of the processes of social production associated with musicmaking, the link between social relations and spatial expression is at root part of its very definition. In thinking about the links between social forms and spatial practice, we can ask: how does daily routine acquire the character of ritual? To which we might tentatively answer: through deliberate inscription of habit onto place. One Montreal respondent termed these the “habit trails” which musicmakers have inscribed into their experience and image of the city. There are numerous shared points of connection in Montreal, studios such as Mom and Pop Studios, performance/social sites including the Casa del Popolo (St. Laurent/St. Joseph), its larger sister space, La Sala Rossa (St. Laurent/St. Joseph), Barfly (St. Laurent/Duluth) and cafes such as Open Da Night (a nickname given the signless Olympic Sports Bar, the original name it has since reverted back to) on St. Viateur. A number of respondents noted these sites on their maps and referred to them in their diaries. Notably, post offices also registered as significant sites, where a number of people went to either receive parcels (master tapes, CDs) or send material (promotional packages, etc.). Ritual serves to connect these places to one another in a loose circuit made up of sites of social renewal, wherein people make music-related decisions and affirm their commitment to musicmaking. They do so in ways which reinforce the value of those networks needed to produce and promote music (meeting label owners at the Casa for “business”). The aggregate activity in turn produces the sense of conviviality and a communal ambience of the kind associated with bohemia.

The way in which individual movements can be understood in relation to patterns of belonging, how ritual functions to bind people together materially and symbolically, and then how those might be linked to material factors and the contours of the urban imaginary are taken up by Finnegan in her study of the music scene in Milton Keynes. It was suggested previously that her term “pathways” recalls Bourdieu’s habitus as it links together both material and symbolic/discursive aspects of musicmaking. Musical activity is, according to Finnegan,

a series of familiar and—by their followers—taken-for-granted routes through what might otherwise have been the impersonal wilderness of urban life, paths which people shared with others in a predictable yet personal fashion. They were not all-encompassing or always clearly known to outsiders, but settings in which relationships could be forged, interests shared, and a continuity of meaning achieved in the context of urban living.

(Finnegan, 1989: 306)

There is a symbolic depth to pathways which lends them their affective charge and deeper resonance, as well as a sense of regularity. Many of the maps of Montreal’s scene, such as Krista’s, Greg’s and Ian’s, all gave some indication of the affectivity associated with certain sites, including the Casa del Popolo, Barfly, etc. Finnegan has described in detail the relationship between material and symbolic aspects of musicmaking according to the complex set of pathways shaping musical and social life in the city of Milton Keynes:

The multiplicity of pathways matches the heterogeneity often seen as a characteristic of urban life, the overlap of many distinct paths reflecting the many-sided, situational, often changing lives that people lead in towns today. But they bring, too, a sense of belonging and reality: traveling not in an alien environment but along familiar paths in time and space, in family continuity and habitual action. The pathways have their continuities too. They depend on regular sets of largely predictable and purposeful activities that it is easy to overlook if attention is focused primarily

on networks of individuals or the interaction of multiple special interest groups.

(324)

As she suggests, there is a deliberate or intentional quality to musical pathways which distinguishes them from the more mechanical connotations associated with a term such as network. More importantly, pathways are the principle means of ordering the city:

These pathways, then, are one of the ways in which people within an urban environment organize their lives so as to manage, on the one hand, the heterogeneity and multiplicity of relationships characteristic of many aspects of modern society, and, on the other, that sense of both predictable familiarity and personally controlled meaning that is also part of human life.

(325)

In both these passages, Finnegan makes it clear that this conception of pathways brings together the material and symbolic aspects associated with musicmaking, but she also connects spatial practice with spaces of representation and representations of spaces. While this remains a theory grounded in the everyday experience of the city, it gives us an analysis of musicmaking in an urban context which maps the scene according to the various itineraries which are at work simultaneously. Habit as a form of personal action, the routine spatialization of musical activity through individual and shared channels in this case, is one means through which people make sense of an abstract and often alienating urban environment. The habitus here acts as a social matrix which helps individuals sift through urban data, organize it and respond accordingly. In this sense, it also highlights possible links between the experiential and materialist framework, bringing together the subjective and objective aspects of each through the process of structuration. The mapping exercises and the gathering of diaristic details have proven the most straightforward way of getting at the nature of pathways and the habitus in

Montreal, with these depictions and accounts providing an individualized description of the movement through space, whether ritualized or not, which can thicken up the materialist analysis. These accounts have outlined in intimate detail how important sites (such as the Casa, Barfly, etc.) are to the production and reproduction of musical culture in Montreal.

Mapping might also serve as a conceptual tool which can get at the ideological dimensions of those processes shaping social life in the city. For instance, Relph offers a graphical metaphor which suggests that the formation of place-images occurs along two axes:

Images of place have both a vertical and a horizontal structuring. The vertical structure is one of intensity and depth of experience and has layers corresponding basically to those of the various levels of outsidership and insidership. The horizontal structure is that of the social distribution of knowledge of places within and between individuals, groups, and the mass.

(Relph, 1976: 56)

Map-making was combined with journal writing in order to provide a preliminary outline of the deeper material and imaginative structure of everyday life in Montreal as refracted through the prism of sociomusical experience. Maps are tools whose utility lies in their ability to discern the spatialization processes at work in musicmaking, where spaces are differentiated from one another according to functionality and affective investment (Ian's map provides ample evidence of this). The concept of spatialization proves vital to an understanding of how different maps of Montreal co-exist and offers one more analytical tool necessary for a more expansive consideration of images of the city and their relationship to social contexts and social action.

By way of concluding, it should be made clear that analyses of how social differences and cultural distinctions play themselves out should not be allowed to rest solely upon cognitive mapping and journal entries. The nature of social relations should also fall under the materialist framework, as a way of thinking through the ways in which more abstract forces impinge upon musicmaking. The materialist framework can lead to insights into how cultural spaces get ordered temporally, how they are sequentialized, as well as the ways in which musical and social itineraries become constituent parts of the extra-scenic character of city living (see Straw, 2001). Combining this research with the information gathered from maps and diaries accentuates the role played by the behavioral template of the habitus and enables one to consider how it shapes and gets shaped by urban cultural space. Examinations of the materialist dimension also direct analysis towards the ideological aspects of image-making, linking it to the maintenance of social power and status (the preservation of a spatially-biased anglo-hegemony, for example), questions of access, processes of spatialization, and the importance of institutional/industrial support for musicmaking in Montreal.

By drawing the focus away from the personal and intimate features of musicmaking, the materialist framework requires that broader structural forces be factored into a consideration of musicmaking in Montreal. This requires a brief socio-economic history of Montreal, in an effort to lend to the analysis a better sense of the various forces shaping the sociomusical experience. As outlined in more detail in the following chapters, the materialist dimension of musical life in Montreal demonstrates the link between social relations and spatial practices in the city, noting how certain nodes and pathways get inscribed onto the scene and how social difference manifests

itself in terms of movement and conceptions of Montreal. The maps outlined a portion of Montreal musicmaking's socially significant spatial co-ordinates. The maps drawn up by respondents point out significant scene-related sites, and in the interviews a rough sociolinguistic breakdown of the scene was also rendered (the Casa, for example, now one of the central nodes for local and non-local musicmakers, is taken by francophones to be mainly English; by anglophones, a mix of both).

Using the results gleaned from the methods outlined above, it is possible to turn now to more concrete examples of the sociomusical experience found in Montreal. The qualitative approaches adopted for this project have engendered a thick description of musicmaking, highlighting many of the conflicts and compromises residing in the scene. At the same time, they also confirm the usefulness for musicmakers of figuring Montreal as a bohemian space, a place-image which continues to underpin cultural productivity as well as a style of life deemed complementary to the task of being musically creative. The remaining two chapters will take up many of the issues sketched out here, putting them into a quiet dialogue with the history of musicmaking in Montreal, a diachronic analysis undertaken in light of Montreal's socioeconomic history, followed by a synchronic analysis of current musicmaking practices. This latter moment can be read as a scene which instantiates a durable bohemian tradition, replete with its own mythologies and discourses which are both local and not. This mythology is deeply embedded in the soft infrastructure which binds together musical activity, generating for members of the scene a set of shared reference points. This infrastructure is doubly inscribed. At one level, solidarity in the scene depends upon reading the functionality of the city from an aesthetic perspective. Does the city provide the resources needed to lead a satisfying

creative life? This is a sentiment expressed by both francophones and Anglophones, a view of Montreal which brings them together in common cultural purpose. At another level, this image of the city as a bohemia is a complex and uneven representation within which various local divisions and distinctions continue to play out at the level of sociomusical experience. The different conceptions of place-image say a great deal about the tensions found among musicmakers in Montreal, many of which are taken up in the remaining chapters.

NOTES

¹ See Aull Davies, 1999.

² See Martin, 2000: 10.

³ Strauss, cited in Relph, 1976: 61.

⁴ Favro's use of cognitive mapping is one which reconstructs Augustan Rome, having the reader stroll through an imaginative rendering of the city. Hale uses cognitive mapping to compare Chicago and Philadelphia using Decerteau's notion of "tactics" to make distinctions between how space in the two cities is negotiated.

⁵ *Hour*, March 14, 2003

Chapter Four

“Is This the Next Hip Place?”

A combination of geographic, economic, social and political factors has made Montreal both a contentious and attractive place for Canadian and non-Canadian musicians alike. Although its place in the national music scene is notable as much for its wax as for its wane, Montreal remains a significant city for its historical role in the evolution of musical production in Quebec and Canada. The strengths and weaknesses of Montreal musicmaking have been intimately tied to a nexus of political, economic and demographic factors which together have produced a complex set of determinations which affect musical production, distribution and consumption. As a way of probing the sociomusical experience offered by the city, what follows is a brief historical outline of how musicmaking unfolded in Montreal at various moments in the twentieth century. This will chart three different but intertwined narratives: first, the consolidation of the provincial music industry and the emergence of a francophone independent scene; second, a brief history of anglophone musicmaking as it evolved in relation to changes in the social makeup of the city; and third, a contemporary view of independent anglophone musical production in Montreal, as seen primarily through the eyes of its participants. As it is described here, anglophone musicmaking (and specifically independent musicmaking) in the city developed in relation to an emerging Quebecois music industry and its attendant cultural apparatus. In the latter decades of the last century, this industry, centered in Montreal, would become a dominant force in local musical production. Hard and soft infrastructures associated with francophone musicmaking were strengthened through a range of cultural industries and institutions and, thus, were defined in large part

according to specific sociopolitical transformations. The anglophone equivalents have developed in tandem with, and often in contradistinction to, these infrastructures. The resulting attitudes and aesthetic strategies adopted by anglophone musicmakers in Montreal exemplify a diverse range of responses to the problems and promises of making music in Montreal. As such the third portion of this chapter will focus primarily on the perceptions and experiences of a selection of past and current musicmakers as a way of leading into a discussion of mythmaking and place-image in the city.

The Quebec Scene

The context for musical production in Montreal, Quebec as well as Canada changed dramatically over the course of the twentieth century. These were changes which came as a result of technological, economic, political transformations and unfolded in tandem with a number of discursive shifts. These alterations determined the nature of production, distribution and consumption of music locally, regionally and nationally. Their impact upon aspects of the musicmaking in Montreal was felt by francophones, anglophones and allophones alike. Combined with the appearance of granting agencies and funding bodies as well as changes in cultural policy in the last thirty years, the result was a dramatic effect on the types of sociomusical experience available to musicmakers in Montreal. The way in which these shifts manifested themselves in the city resulted in a reorientation of aesthetic strategies and politics which are difficult to disentangle from debates and discussions about language-based cultural policies and the discursive formations which they help to constitute. However, a brief outline of some of the more

notable consequences for francophone musicmaking can help contextualize some of the anglophone experiences in Montreal.

Grenier's focus on québécois independent labels (indies) is central to understanding the sociopolitical context of musical production in Quebec and Montreal. She stated previously that the emergence and rapid growth of indies in the province provoked a shift in the distribution of power between local and transnational firms in Quebec, the consequence being the economic reinforcement of the local industry as a whole. Indies did not achieve this position simply because of their place in French-language genres, as she noted above (1996: 315). Many of these indie labels developed out of distribution companies which had decided to move into record production. In this respect, the Quebec music industry mirrored developments happening in the rest of Canada (see Grenier, 1996; Straw, 1993, 1996). (The strategies of derivative records and its distribution relationship with Cargo are hardly anomalous, given this kind of historical precedence.)

These shifts, however negligible, culminated in the emergence of a different kind of Québécois musical culture. These changes were, for the most part, the result of alterations in the structure of how music was produced, itself a response to certain economic and technological imperatives, which ultimately meant the consolidation of the industry to ensure its long term survival. This led to the emergence of what Grenier calls the Québec "mainstream." The term "mainstream" should not be understood as a musical genre or category *per se*, but rather a particular form of musical communication, conjuring up a "whole way of conceiving, making and using popular music" (216). Part of this shift depended upon the transition during the eighties of musical formats, moving

away from vinyl to cassette to new media such as compact discs. But there were other determining factors as well: the shift from sales of albums to the exploitation of copyright as an important source of income for the industry; the emergence of film and video (as opposed to radio) as the main avenue for exposure; and the substitution of the individual record buyer by television, film and advertisement audiences as target consumers. Every dimension of the recording industry was being transformed, constantly adjusting as new modes of production, marketing and technological innovations had to be accommodated.

These sorts of recalibrations, coming as a result of the political and economic consolidation of Quebec's music industries, had a profound effect on the social construction of music in the province. Previously there was a notable (and audible) distinction audiences could make between the long-standing *chansonnier* tradition and the upstart rock/pop idiom that had come to prominence over the last two decades. These two schools, according to Grenier, can be understood as opposed forces, which forged very strong politicized allegiances among their respective audiences. The *chanson* tradition is, in the minds of its pop/rock opposite, a "snobbish intellectual clique known not only for its more or less overt nationalist discourse but, more importantly, for its connections with the provincial government and its funding institutions - in short for its close association with the establishment" (1996: 312). The *chanson* tradition has always had a profound political dimension, surrounded by an "authentic québécois aura" (1995: 220). *Chanson* itself can mean either an individual music piece with lyrics or a lyric oriented genre. The rock/pop tradition, on the other hand, is seen by those drawn to the *chansonnier* tradition as "a kitsch, tacky, populist clique, consisting of pragmatic and realistic advocates of mass culture and especially of mass consumption, who claimed to

be the real voice of the Québécois people, but who were primarily interested in defending their own commercial interests” (1996: 312).

Notable changes took place during the 1980s that had a profound effect on the sociomusical experience within Quebec. The *chansonnier* tradition, which up until then had been founded on the sustained interest of a selection of artists “their biography, career and... their political agenda as well” (1995: 219), had now been superseded by an emphasis, at most levels of the industry, on individual songs by new “star performers.” The emergence of these star performers, aided and abetted by an apparatus of celebrity supported by cross-marketing through film, video, stage and television, also came at a time when genre-boundaries were loosening up.¹ At this point, the distinctions between chanson and pop-rock no longer appeared to hold. At the same time the prestige previously attached to singer/songwriters had been superseded by the much more media savvy role of the artist/performer. It is further evidence, Grenier suggests, that within Quebec there was “a gradual but unmistakable dismantling of most genre and artistic category hierarchical power/knowledge distinctions around which its trade and artistic milieus have been organised since the advent of an indigenous music industry in the early 1960s” (220). All these changes culminated in the appearance of a musical pluralism that Quebec had not seen before, one in which there no longer appeared to be a centripetal and unifying force drawing the musical community together.

These changes had a significant effect on the sociomusical spaces within the province. These spaces, where music was produced, distributed and consumed, have been best defined along two axes: scenes and communities (Straw, 1991). The notion of community denotes a relatively stable population group “whose involvement in music

takes the form of an ongoing exploration of one or more musical idioms said to be rooted within a geographically specific historical heritage” (Straw, 1991: 373). A scene, its is worth recalling, is a “cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization” (ibid). As Grenier suggests, both these sets of social and aesthetic traditions coexist in the province of Quebec, with significant ramifications for how the Quebec mainstream comes to be re-defined.

Until the mid 1970s the musical, political and cultural configurations within Québec’s musical culture articulated a sense of purpose. This depended upon a strong affective link between on the one hand, contemporary indigenous musical practices, especially those comprised within the singer-songwriters chansonnier movement, and on the other hand, the twofold musical heritage which rendered this music appropriate to its particular context - that is Québec’s heritage as a national group of French descent and as one of the few Francophone minority groups in predominantly Anglophone North America.

(Grenier, 1995: 128)

Within the musical scene, the sense of purpose is articulated in terms of alliances rather than binary oppositions:

Alliances between traditionally scattered, if not feuding industry camps, is a defining trait of the space within which Québécois music gains its specificity not in the strict sense of language, but through ethnicity as well. Québécois music is not necessarily French, but Francophone, and this translates as, music from Québec which is not necessarily Anglo.

(ibid)

The music scene in Quebec was “facing the issue of language in popular music, not in terms of poetic and non-poetic forms, chanson vs. Pop/rock, but in terms of culture and ethnicity” (ibid). She continues, suggesting that those alliances the Quebec scene strikes

with other musical communities are a result of “multilateral inclusion” (as opposed to the bilateral exclusion that the notion of community connotes) (ibid):

Musically speaking, it enables alliances between cultures the world over, but moreover, between musics sung in countless languages... For Québécois music, this means not only an international forum for music, as well as one where artists who sing in languages other than French (and English) are more than welcome, but also an opportunity to explore, locally, musical idioms hitherto excluded from the entire socio-musical scape in Québec.

(ibid)

The changes wrought upon the sociomusical experience in Quebec have created a complex musical pluralism. We are left with something of a paradox in the case of francophone musicmaking: even as the province appears to become more insular at the level of politics and language, the emergence of a Quebec mainstream and the blurring of genres has resulted in a new sociocultural formation which has allowed a more open and accepting approach to a diverse selection of musical idioms from around the world. Montreal figured into this new configuration as a cultural hub where cultural industries and institutions could coordinate their activities in conjunction with one another, forming precisely that “institutional thickness” that Amin and Thrift describe within which musical production and consumption in Montreal could be understood inflected by a nexus of global/local interests and orientations.²

This also created a context for anglophone cultural production which was concomitantly separate from, but also deeply imbricated in, the politics (linguistic and otherwise), economics and discourses which shaped the francophone sociomusical, as well as urban, experience. The emergence of an anglophone mainstream and independent musical culture during the last century was tied in many ways to developments in the francophone industry, as well as those happening in the national and international cultural

arenas. The fortunes of many musicmakers were also bound up in the changing economic fortunes of the city, alterations in the space of the city, as well as dramatic demographic shifts. The results for all musicmakers were fraught but there were productive cultural spaces that were notable for their “conflictual harmony” and those who populated them felt a commitment to making music work in Montreal.

Anglophone musicmaking in Montreal

Montreal’s place in a burgeoning national recording industry was established when Emile Berliner (1851-1929) moved from the United States to Montreal in 1900.³ Having designed the first gramophone that played zinc discs and not wax cylinders, Berliner encountered complications securing the rights with the U.S. patent office to sell it, encouraging him to seek out a patent in Canada. When this was granted, he came to Montreal and established a manufacturing shop which would press discs from masters coming in from the U.S. and Europe. With a retail shop at 2315 Ste. Catherine St. W. and a manufacturing plant based near the working class neighbourhood of St. Henri (at 367-368 Aqueduct St., now Lucien L’Allier St.) the Berliner Gramophone Company of Canada soon established a small network of stores catering to Canadian and American audiences. Berliner soon established a recording studio at 138A Peel St. (a larger warehouse would be built in 1921 on St. Antoine St.). Based in the city’s industrial district, near to the Lachine Canal (at the time still one of North America’s main transportation arteries), he took advantage of Montreal’s role at that time as a transportation hub to import materials for the manufacture and distribution of his recordings. In 1901, the Victor Talking Machine Company bought into Berliner’s

fledgling company. By 1909, Berliner's company was recording artists, mainly francophone, but with some anglophone participation, using a recording studio established on Peel St. Compo Records (based in Lachine), run by one of Berliner's sons was established in 1918 (it dissolved in 1925, a year after RCA had bought up Victor). Although initially established as a "branch plant," pressing records for the American companies Okeh and Gennett, it soon became a strong competitor to his father's company in the rapidly expanding Canadian music industry. A Compo-backed label, Ajax, concentrated solely on "race records." This boutique label recorded (in the US) and distributed mainly African-American musicians (many recorded at a studio Herbert had set up in New York). White anglophone musicians would gain better distribution through Compo and Berliner (notable musicians include Willie Eckstein, the Melody Kings, Harry Thomas, Vera Guilaroff). The local music scene gained significant support with the appearance of radio. In 1919, the first license was issued to XWA Montreal (later CFCF – "Canada's First, Canada's Finest"), allowing it to air the first broadcast in North America: a concert by a female vocalist, Dorothy Lutton. In that same it year, it broadcast Montrealers Willie Eckstein and singer Gus Hall. Another pioneering radio station, CKAC Radio, would be the first to broadcast a remote, non-studio recording of a black band. By 1920, XWA was broadcasting regularly (Gilmore, 41).

During the twenties, the music scene was beginning to flourish courtesy the appearance of a number of clubs and a healthy number of musicians. The scene for musicmakers at the time began expanding dramatically. "Black clubs" like the Clef Club (1118 St. Antoine W.), the Terminal (across from Windsor Station, catering to visiting musicians) and Rockhead's Paradise (1258 St. Antoine) opened and catered to rising

demand for jazz (the clientele at the time consisted mainly of railway porters, and was the only black-owned club (Gilmore, 49)). Located west of downtown, near Mountain and Drummond St., south of Ste. Catherine St., these clubs hosted many bands of note including the Harlem Dukes of Rhythm and later the Canadian Ambassadors. By the late twenties and early thirties, the burgeoning recording and radio industries were complemented by a thriving jazz scene. The scene, such as it was, catered to an expanding black audience, many of whom worked for the railway and the port itself and lived in the working class neighbourhoods nearby, such as St. Henri, Verdun, Lachine and St. Antoine. The lack of intra-urban transportation at the time also restricted movement, ensuring that the audiences for the scene stayed relatively homogenous and consistent.

Much of the jazz scene's success in the twenties and into the thirties also had to do with the city's liberal approach to alcohol regulation. With most of North America trying to come to grips with strict liquor laws under Prohibition, Montreal bars and nightclubs took full advantage of the province's looser regulations.⁴ Montreal's status as a tolerant city allowed it to become a jazz mecca for international musicians seeking an afterhours jam and easy access to alcohol. Nightclubs were by then a fixture of Montreal musical life, but access was strictly determined along racial lines. The local musicians guild (the Musician's Guild of Montreal), refused to have blacks as members, thereby barring them from performing at many of the city's downtown nightclubs. These policies were in place until the 1940s, preventing black and white musicians from working together for the duration of the Depression (the Clef Club was one exception).

Alongside the hotel bars reserved for more refined singers and bands (the Ritz Cafe in the posh Ritz-Carlton Hotel), there were numerous other venues including Tic Toc/Chez Paree (1258 Stanley), the El Morocco (1410 Metcalfe), Chez Maurice (1244 Ste. Catherine St. W.), Frolics (1417 St. Laurent), the Bellevue Casino (375 Ontario St. W), and at the Montmartre (59 Ste. Catherine St. W.– one of the earliest references to the bohemian tradition, although that claim could also be made about Café La Boheme at 1418 Guy).



(Ad for the Montmartre, from John Gilmore's *Swinging in Paradise*, courtesy Myron Sutton Collection, Concordia University)

During the forties many of these clubs housed a variety of jazz combos, including the Peter Barry Trio, and the swing band the Johnny Holmes Orchestra, which at times featured Montreal-born trumpeter Maynard Ferguson and pianist Oscar Peterson (born in St. Henri). The audiences were black and white, a larger percentage made up of a growing middle-class, a demographic shift which signaled Montreal's gradual transition from an industrial economy to a burgeoning

service economy. There were numerous spatial consequences to this change in economic structure and orientation. An expanding middle class which was moving out from the city and into new suburbs meant the de-densification of the downtown core (population density had decreased by 1961 to 69 people per hectare, down from 79 in 1907) (Marsan, 1981: 323). A generalized increase in the standard of living encouraged the outward migration of the middle-class, with more and more suburbs radiating outwards from the downtown core. A shortening of the work week meant more leisure time, and the growing perception that downtown was more of an entertainment and business complex rather than a living space proper. These changes were combined with the gradual centralization and concentration of administrative and financial institutions downtown (and the move to the city's nether regions of various industries), the result being the slow depopulation of Montreal.

The vibrant jazz scene of the previous decades would lose some of its energy by the late forties and early fifties, due in part to a provincial government bent on cleaning up corruption in Montreal (see Weintraub, 1996). Many musicians would find employment in studio sessions for radio and television, such as the CBC (which established a Montreal television studio in 1952) or left for Toronto, Vancouver, LA or New York. Nightclubs were also trying to adjust to stricter laws regulating alcohol consumption. Just as significant, however, was the emergence of a younger audience with disposable income which meant a shift in musical tastes and trends. Throughout the late fifties and sixties, rock and pop, and the venues supporting these new genres, began to proliferate to meet the new demand. The English Montreal scene at the time was populated by bands such as the Haunted, pop groups such as the Bells (with Frank Mills),

J.B. and the Playboys, Purple Haze, M.G. and the Escorts, the Phantoms, Our Generation, Ray Blake's Combo and the Dominoes.

Folk clubs formed a significant part of the Montreal music scene in the sixties and early seventies (with Bob Dylan performing what would become an oft-bootlegged show at the Finjan Club). One such venue, The Yellow Door, based in an anglo-dominated neighbourhood next to one of the city's English bastions, McGill University, remains one of the oldest-running folk clubs in North America. Out of this folk scene would emerge Kate and Anna McGarrigle and on the margins, coming from the city's lively literary scene, Leonard Cohen. Cohen, in his novel, The Favourite Game, would neatly encapsulate the social politics in Montreal at the time:

“But Krantz, it's Montreal you're leaving, Montreal on the very threshold of greatness, like Athens, like New Orleans.”

“The Frogs are vicious,” he said, “the Jews are vicious, the English are absurd.”

“That why we're great, Krantz. The cross-fertilization.”

“Okay, Breavman, you stay here to chronicle the Renaissance.”
(Leonard Cohen, The Favourite Game)⁵

Alongside their penchant for folk music, Montreal audiences have long harboured a passion for hard and progressive rock, a taste which emerged in the 70s through such local artists as April Wine, Bob Segarini, Mashmakhan, and Frank Marino and Mahogany Rush. In the early seventies, local impresario, and later concert promoter, Donald K. Donald, established Aquarius Records which released (and continues to release) both rock and pop recordings. From the mid-to-late part of the decade, disco, too, was in evidence, with the bilingual Patsy Gallant releasing the hit single “From New York to LA” (an English translation of Gilles Vigneault's “Mon Pays C'est le Hiver”).

Gino Vannelli offered an early contribution to Montreal's nascent disco scene in 1974 with the dance single "Powerful People." During the seventies, disco would act as a defining element of the city's musical culture for locals and non-locals, producing an impression of a "thriving disco metropolis"⁶ which played off of a by-now standard, and soon to be maligned, place-image of Montreal:

They used to call Montreal the Paris of North America—the city that offered the best nightlife on the continent.

Much of that image is gone—or at least faded. Most of the big, brassy, glittering clubs have closed, undermined by the trend to smaller, more intimate rooms, and, of course, television.

But there's still one aspect of Montreal entertainment that doesn't take a back seat to any other city's.

Our discotheques rank among the best in the world. They offer the standard disco image—the loud, freaky, colour-splattered mind-bending environment—but there's an extra ingredient that sets them apart. That catalyst is the unique cultural background of the city, the European heritage that has opened to Montreal a whole new world of entertainment that can't be found anywhere else on the continent

Yes, it's the same force that gave Montreal the Paris of North America image, and it's surviving in discotheques.

*(The Montreal Gazette, June 6, 1970)*⁷

By 1977, disco clubs in and around the city would number near two hundred.⁸

Given disco and progressive rock's hegemony in Montreal, punk, in its strident defiance of mainstream music, would position these genres as musical "Others" against which it would define itself.

Punk and Independent Music

The punk and new wave scene was for the most part centered on 364 St. Paul O. which was a storefront that Robert Ditchburn, a young filmmaker seemed to rent for no other purpose than to let bands practise in it and to have shows with bands on the weekends. That was nice of him, wasn't it? There were occasionally bands

playing in more conventional venues, like the bar at the Hotel Nelson, but 364 was the best. Absolutely thrilling in its prime. There were certain bands that played there frequently like the Young Adults, the Chromosomes, the 222's, Lorne Ranger and the band I was in—the Normals; and other bands like the Widows, the Aliens, the Devices, and so on. At the same time you had clothing stores like Scandale starting up and Pyer Desrochers' punk stall on St. Denis with Sex and Seditonaries stuff.

(Tracy)

I think that one of the things that has always identified Montreal, was, besides the weather, that you always had the difficult and destabilizing pressure of two languages. But I always felt that it made us less pretentious, poorer, less is more. And so we kind of had a more authentic dimension.

(Louise)

Montréal is a strange, sad, crumbling city. The spectre of Québec nationalism over the last quarter-century, and the resulting outflow of English ruling-class capital, combines political and economic uncertainty with a healthy dose of cultural insecurity. Alienation always looming on the horizon, we drink and smoke and adopt a fatalistic attitude, living on welfare, shit jobs, ever-dwindling grants, taking cold comfort in the collapsing urban geography of vacant buildings, broken roads, low rent. We all drink at the same bar, shuffle around, try to make work, waiting for the horizon to shift.

Montréal, like any city, is a place to chart paths of escape collectively. The reasons for being here are various, but the pattern is the same: dearth of opportunity and excess of cultural alienation breeds its own fragile community. The city slowly transforms itself from backdrop for isolation to inhabited nexus of collaboration and activity. We begin to realise the possibilities of this low-budget, break-even town, and the struggle for cultural expression becomes implicitly winnable by independent means. Shows take place under the radar, in our own spaces, without official sanction, and everyone gets along.

(from the Constellation Records website)

These comments, which extend from punk's early days to the contemporary scene, share a common perception of Montreal's cultural vitality, one tied to a vision of the city as fraught with tensions (economic and linguistic mainly). Over the course the twentieth century, Montreal's

status as a national economic and social centre would slowly erode. It would lose the majority of its financial institutions and insurance companies to cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and later Calgary. Yet, contrary to many anglo accounts of the decline of Montreal, this had little to do with the rise of the sovereignty movement or the “quiet revolution.” In fact, the disappearance of financial institutions, as well as the ancillary services they require, began as early as the nineteenth century (Germain and Rose, 2000; Code, 1996). The de-metropolization of Montreal, its reduction to a regional centre after being such a vibrant national one, was a process which took the better part of the twentieth century. Its decline registered among anglophones most acutely, however, when the Parti Quebecois came to power in 1976, perceived by many of them to be the historical moment when Montreal’s role in national affairs, financial and otherwise, had diminished irreparably.

There were also notable demographic shifts occurring in Montreal at the time. The “baby boom” which had affected most of North America was also felt in Montreal. Changes in the provincial education system courtesy the “quiet revolution” had provided good education and the promise of jobs for a number of older members of this privileged generation. By the late seventies, many of the younger members of this generation were suffering the consequences of a provincial economic downturn. Throughout the late seventies and well into the eighties, education remained strong, but job prospects diminished. Between 1971 and 1983, the unemployment rate for 15-19 year-olds had increased from 11 percent to 27 percent (Linteau, et al, 1991: 323). Linteau notes that “many considered the youth of the 1980s a lost generation” (ibid). Combine this with the ongoing spatial transformations of the city as manufacturing districts like Old Montreal were gutted as businesses moved upward and outward—leaving dozens of abandoned warehouses in their wake—and the makings of a modern bohemia, with its

“proletaroid intelligentsia” (Bourdieu, above) and the cultural squatting which made ample use of derelict lofts and warehouse space, was clearly at hand.

For many Montreal musicmakers, sentiments such as this were nourished by an economic decline and disdain for middle-class sensibilities which combined in such a way that they provided the right context to take musical action. Simon Frith, describing the punk scenes in late seventies England contextualizes it as part of a longstanding bohemian tradition:

The bohemian way of life has been central to British rock culture since the days when such fellows as John Lennon and Stuart Sutcliffe found themselves in Hamburg’s low life. Rock’s radical proletarianism now, as then, come primarily from its social associations with the lumpen leisure of city streets and clubs and bars. Punk’s cultural significance, in particular, derives not from its articulation of the experience of unemployment, but from its exploration of the aesthetics of proletarian play.

So the notion of dole queue rock needs refining at least. For the vast majority of the young unemployed, pop music is an ever-present background to social activity, but has no particular ideological significance. And, in this respect, punk is just another form of pop. It is not heard as an expression of their condition. Their problem is work, punk’s concern is leisure. The dole queuers who do identify with punk do so because they share its concern with play. They are, in this way, bohemians. And this is the source of punk’s politics: not, despite the best efforts of the Socialist Workers’ Party and the Communists, and the National Front even, as the voice of unemployed youth, but as a strident expression of the traditional bohemian challenge to orderly consumption.

(Simon Frith, 1978: 536)

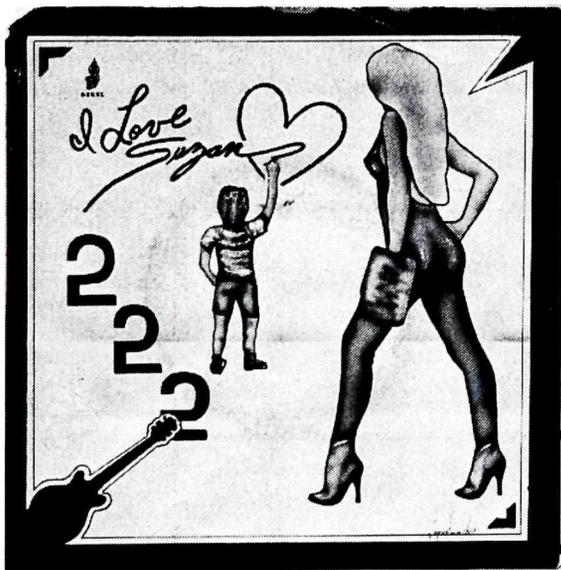
This sense of leisure and play informed much of the early Montreal scene, although this was a much more middle-class suburbanite phenomenon, with many of the punks coming in from the South Shore and West Island. The late seventies and early eighties witnessed a flourishing independent punk and new wave scene in the city which

would give birth to numerous short- and long-lived bands and musical careers.

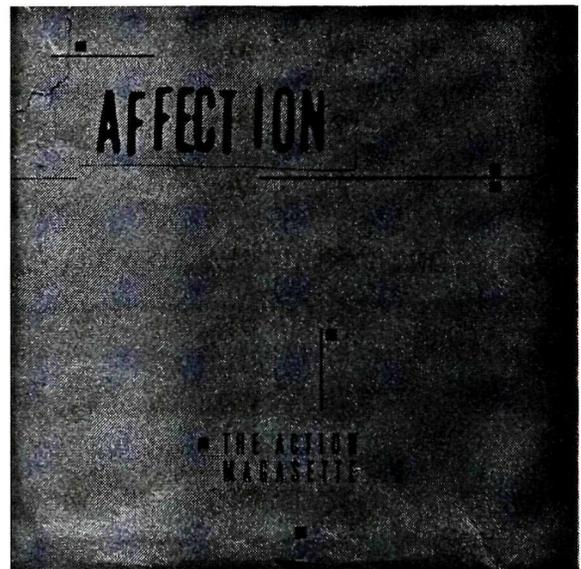
Performing in numerous clubs (such as 364 St. Paul in Old Montreal and the Hotel Nelson (Place Jacques-Cartier)), bands such as the Electric Vomit (later the American Devices), Action Men on Assignment, Terminal Sunglasses, the Normals, Lorne Ranger, Heaven 17 (later Rational Youth), the Paradots, Vomit and the Zits, Pop Stress, the Pinups (which included Sass Jordan), and the 222's (later the 39 Steps), were all part of a nascent underground music scene which would flourish over the next few years. While predominantly anglophone, punk (and later hardcore) stood out at the time for its visible and audible francophone participation:

The only distinction I can recall sensing was that hardcore bands were more the francophone scene. That's at least how we perceived it.... Even Oi!, which was actually quite British, seemed to appeal more to francophones. It was a lot more closed, working-class francophone.

(Louise)



(222's first single, 1978, courtesy Paul Gott)



(Cassette release featuring Action Men on Assignment, American Devices, Lamp Bros. and Deja Voodoo, courtesy Paul Gott)

Guided by a standard do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos characteristic of punk, much of what these musicmakers did was supported by a small but enthusiastic audience. Fans

and musicians alike put together zines such as the late 70s' *Surfin' Bird* (edited by Dave Hill, an original member of Men Without Hats, when they were, what he termed, a "guitar band"), *Going Underground*, and *Red She Said*. The latter zine, in its inaugural issue, echoed a sentiment typical of many zine manifestos:

Um... it's difficult for me to write something without sounding cynical, at this point. Ever since (The Specials') "Ghost Town" was released I've felt Montreal finally acquired its own theme song. I keep trying to tell people "Things happen here, too!" –this said in a pleading voice.

(Clea Notar, *Red She Said*, Vol. 1, August 9, 1982)



(Red She Said, Issue No. 1, 1982)

Guitar-based bands, while dominant locally, lost out globally to synth-pop acts. The global chart success of the Men Without Hats' 1982 pop single "Safety Dance" put Montreal on the map again briefly and drew attention to similar acts such as the cool synthesized sound of Rational Youth. Tracy, one of the founders of Rational Youth, felt much more of an aesthetic affinity with the francophone scene at the time:

I definitely gravitated toward the francophone scene because it was always more conceptual and aesthetically aware—at first anyway. The anglophone scene tended to be more sort of basic and anti-style and most of their references were American. If they were arty they were interested in all that New York David Byrne stuff, which I think was even prissier than the Euro-trash that I was into - or they were just nihilistic party animals. Then in 1980 or so there was a huge sort of second wave of francophone punks who all of a sudden appeared, and they were sort of a back to basics backlash, I think. The band I was in at the time, Heaven Seventeen, was trying to be a sort of John Foxx-era Ultravox/Howard Devoto type of endeavour, and once in early 1980 we played at the St..Denis Theatre, opening for XTC, and the second wave crowd gave us a rough ride, practically bottling us off the stage (I think they found XTC too subtle though).

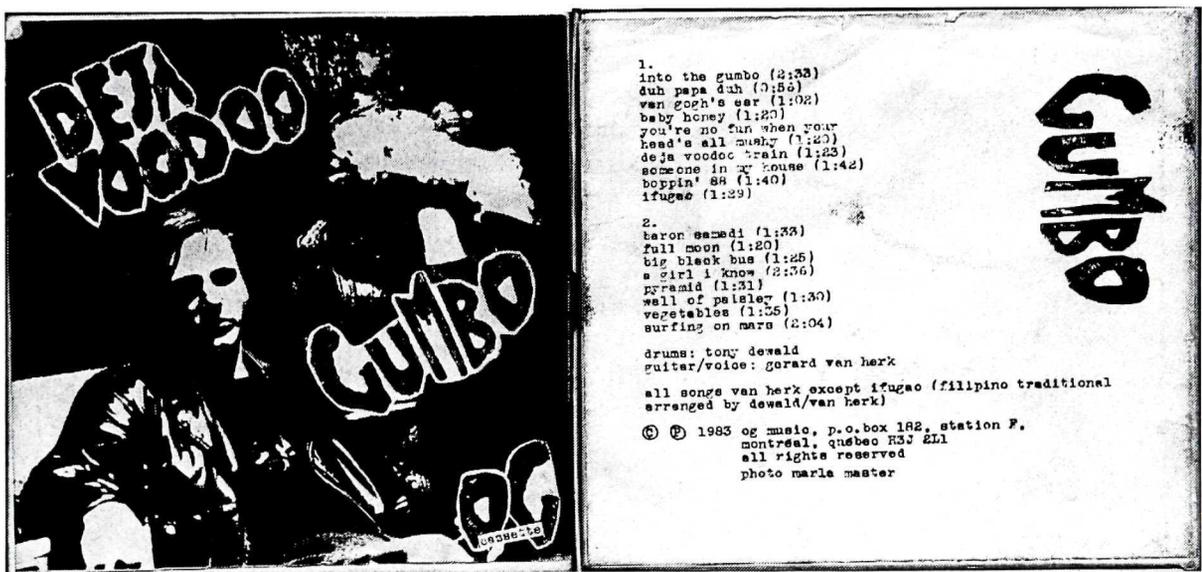
I don't remember (language) even being an issue - it was very friendly, really. Mind you, I think this was the first generation of Quebecois youth since the late fifties that was more or less apolitical, and I think in many ways they were rebelling against the sort of granola-*independentiste* generation before them. I think because of that they were more open to anglophones, and basically for all of us the subculture was more important than the official culture(s).

(Tracy)

Tracy's comments signal an aesthetic affinity a more refined European coolness, around what would soon be called the New Romantics (Duran Duran, Ultravox), art-school aesthetes who combined artifice and style and put it to a synthesized rhythm track (much of their work was influenced by Italo-disco producer/musician Giorgio Moroder, the man behind Donna Summer's "Love to Love You"). Tracy's latter comment indicates a new kind of apolitical stance surrounding language that was prevalent during this early period. The emphasis among many anglophone musicians at the time was on cross-cultural solidarity (a rhetoric which extends to today). The axis of differentiation was not along language lines, but instead one founded upon a rejection of the staid

culture of their parents, separatist or not. As Tracy suggests, even among the nascent *independentistes* the conflict was generational.

At the same time, other acts were making music with less arty pretensions and demonstrated a commitment to promoting independent musicians. Scene stalwarts and garage-rock aficionados Deja Voodoo set up Og Records in 1982, a label designed to carry local acts as well as other bands from across Canada (showcasing the talents of Montreal garage-rockers and retro-stylists, the Gruesomes, for example, but also releasing a series of compilations, “It Came from Canada,” which highlighted other like-minded Canadian independent bands).



(An early Og cassette, 1983, courtesy Paul Gott)



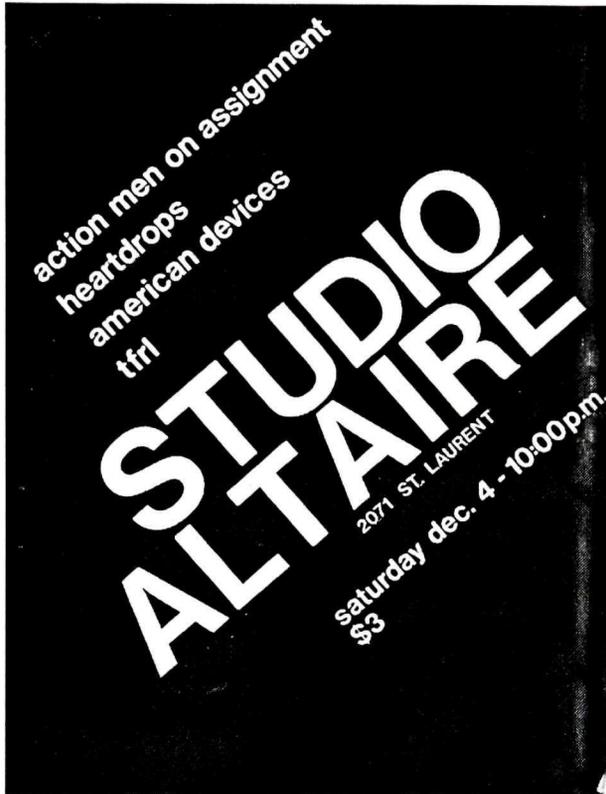
(Deja Voodoo's first release, "Monsters in My Garage," 1982, courtesy Paul Gott)

Other labels which appeared during the early to mid-eighties included YUL, Pipeline, Pysche Industry, and EnGarde. Many of them released singles and albums by bands such as the (still-extant) Ripcordz, Failsafe, the Nils, Terry Fox's Right Leg, the Doughboys, the Darned, My Dog Popper, Sons of the Desert, Jerry Jerry and the Sons of the Rhythm Orchestra (from Edmonton originally), Condition, the Asexuals, the Three O'Clock Train, and Norman Nawrocki's Rhythm Activism, among others. As the scene moved north and found more traditional music venues, many of these acts performed at bars and clubs such as Station 10 (2071 Ste. Catherine St. W), Le Mirage (5121 Parc Ave.), Le Damier-Checkers (4514 Parc Ave.), the Cargo Club (4177 St. Denis), Tatou (3519 St. Laurent), Le Tonic (112 Ste. Catherine W.), Studio Altairs (2071 St. Laurent) the Rising Sun (286 Ste. Catherine W.), La Steppe (5175 Parc Ave.), La Boheme (3781 St. Laurent) Le Zoobar (97 Ste. Catherine E.), which was later annexed by Foufones Electrique (87 Ste. Catherine St. E). Ian Stephens of Red Shift offered an obituary to the Zoobar in *Red She Said*:

It was a fun place to play because you could spray paint the walls, get drunk and chant. There was a room upstairs, sorta a storeroom where you could stretch before the show, get pumped, primed, there was space and dust, and old dumbwaiter in the corner, old decorations, seasons greetings, aluminum foil reindeer, paper bells, chairs, staging, cases of empty bottles. The band could do whatever it wanted for set decorations. Nobody cared, no funky manager. Some of these places are so fucking sterile; geometric furniture, mirrors and star wars lights; feel like I'm there to have an ulcer removed everybody standing around, looking, its like a dog show, cannibals in costume, they give me "attitude". In the Zoobar it was too dark for that. Even the music levels weren't unbearable, you could actually communicate without hand signals. And the sound was generally alright, it was possible to get the momentum clear, the edges between the riffs defined, some good echo.

Another sad moment, head bowed, black breeze, the Zoobar buried, goodbye time.

(from *Red She Said*, Feb. 10, 1983)



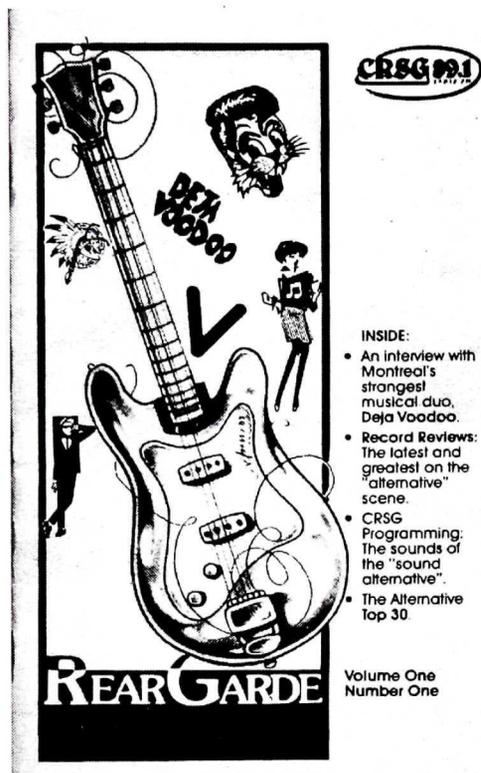
(Studio Altaire, handbill)



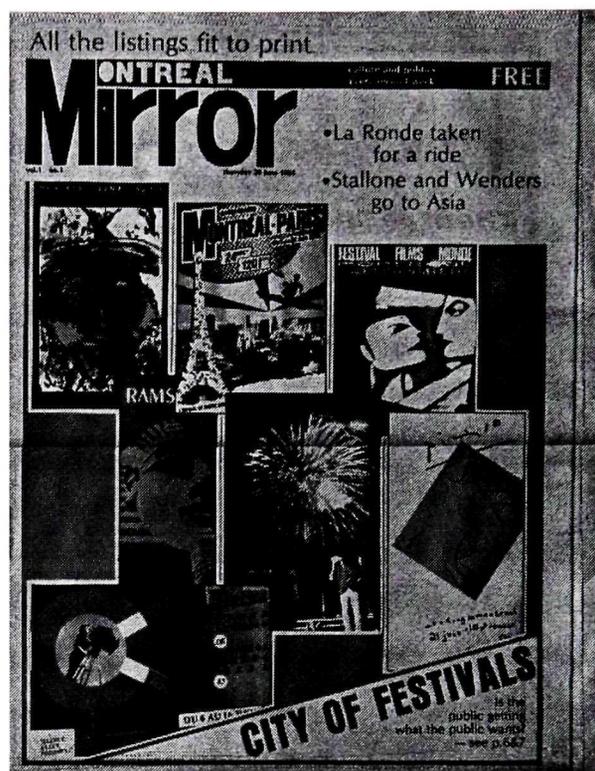
(Le Zoobar, handill)

For most the eighties, anglophone musicians' experience of the city was tempered by lack of broader exposure. Local artists were not well represented by commercial radio, but did get airplay on university-based radio stations such as CRSG (at Concordia) and later from CKUT (at McGill).⁹ (CRSG also had a studio space for a number of bands to record.) The emergence of small-scale alternative magazines in the mid-eighties helped ameliorate the situation, somewhat. An early alternative tabloid-style magazine, *Reargarde* (set up by Paul Gott of the Ripcords and EnGarde records) would lose out to the *Montreal Mirror*, which would later be joined by *Hour* (Feb. 4, 1993). The managing editor of the *Hour*, Martin Siberok, got his start writing for *Red She Said*. The first editorial expressed a by-now standard anglo anxiety, and somewhat ironized the obvious

rhyming allusion to anglo solidarity in the weekly's name *Hour*: "As English-speaking Montrealers, we must continually question our role in this city, in this province, in this country. We must evaluate and assess our situation frequently" (Martin Siberok, Feb. 1993: 4).



(Reargarde's Vol. 1, No. 1, zine style, 1983, courtesy Paul Gott)



(Montreal Mirror, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 20, 1985)

The appearance of the one-stop distributor Cargo Records (1988-1998) also strengthened the industrial networks of the Montreal scene. A joint effort between the defunct Psyche Industries and Better Youth Canada (BYC), the important role that this one-stop distributor would play for Montreal's anglophone musicmakers has already been addressed. It is important to note here, though, that by the late eighties the market for music in Montreal (and Canada) had expanded to a size large enough to accommodate such a venture: "It's a bit cutthroat, but I realize from Psyche that starting out with a bunch of unknowns doesn't make us a lot of friends in record stores. They like artists

that sell,” Randy Boyd, one of the founders said at the time (*Reargarde*, No. 26, Sept. 1988: 5). This sentiment was later echoed by John Kastner, of the Doughboys, who suggested that the small market size of Montreal during that time meant that the desire to move beyond the city was sometimes at odds with the pressure to remain committed to the local scene (the Doughboys had moved to Toronto in the late nineties):

For an English rock band in Montreal there is no business for you at all. There have always been amazing bands, but there’s no industry. If you can get the French kids to like you, it’s a super amazing place. For us, coming from Montreal, the reason we did so much (outsidethe city) was that there was so little for us to do there.... We’re really only known in the English circles and that makes Montreal for us, about as big as Kingston. They fucking resent anybody whoever got out of there.

(Kastner)¹⁰

As the case of derivative records demonstrated, these debates would continue well into the nineties. This anxiety about the reputation or status of Montreal’s scene was also registered by the *Montreal Mirror*, which in 1992 asked a number of writers in other cities their impressions of the Montreal scene:

I can’t think of anyone I specifically know from Montreal, I’m afraid. You have successfully confirmed the fact that too many people in the United States think of Canada as one big place.

(Joe Levy, music editor, *Village Voice*)

I’ve never gotten a sense of the “Montreal Sound.” And this could be a correct or incorrect perception, but I think because Toronto has such a thriving music scene, it sort of eclipses what Montreal is doing.

(Rob Patterson, music editor, *Austin Chronicle*)

This perception would change somewhat during the latter half of the decade of the decade as the anglophone scene expanded in a number of different musical directions. Bands such as the Snitches (who, from the early to mid-nineties, ran their own loft/performance space in Old Montreal, C-Pig or Seapig), Pest 5000 (the “houseband”

for derivative, which also ran its operations out of Old Montreal), the ska of the Kingpins, the harder rock sounds of Tricky Woo and the punk of Bionic, power pop of the Local Rabbits, Planet Smashers, the math rock of Mishima, and the lo-fi rock of Hashimoto, to name but a few, and the appearance of gallery spaces such as Stornaway (located in an abandoned furrier shop on St. Alexandre, near Sam the Record Man, north of Ste. Catherine) that hosted live music nights, comic jams and vernissages, alongside more traditional venues, all suggested a minor renaissance. During the nineties, activity in the anglophone scene would slowly begin to orient towards St. Laurent, where bars such as the Bifteck and performance spaces such as Barfly, Purple Haze and Woodstock, served as important nodes in the evolving musical network. Here local and international bands would mingle with fans and other bands along a vibrant commercial strip in the heart of the city. This coincided with another trend which had dramatic effect on the sociomusical experience in Montreal: by the mid-nineties most of the bars where live music was performed had been converted to pay-to-play venues, where a band would be expected to rent the PA (a fee which often ate into a large chunk of their take of the door or bar). Occasionally a club, such as Jailhouse (Mont Royal, just west of St. Laurent, now defunct) or Purple Haze (now Saphir, a dance bar), would allow bands to take the door, but these were by and large the exception.¹¹ The micro-economy of independent music would prove itself resilient, but the disdain for many of these clubs and their policies was often uttered in the same breath as a general sense that a litany of forces, political and economic mainly, were conspiring against musicmakers generally. A typical response, describing how the scene has unfolded recently, was offered by Neil:

(It's) a slew of separate fiefdoms, all bartering for the same scraps of attention. The old cliché regarding dance music being the

primary focus of attention for media - that, and out-of-town touring bands - is still largely true. For a brief period of time (say, early to mid-90s) there was a resurgence in interest and attention regarding local music (more concerts, more press, more venues) that, for those of us who were just starting new bands and playing at the time, we certainly reaped the benefits. It was heady there for awhile, with bookers calling bands up for shows, and media calling you, rather than the other way around. Lots of label scouting, national media profiles, etc. Now, it's more like when I played in my first bands at 17-18 in the late 80s: no venues, hardly any attention. Still, there's always been a tremendous amount of camaraderie amongst the like-minded (stylistically speaking). Bands you know/play concerts with are (for the most part) always willing to share information regarding bookings, sympathetic journalists, deals on gear, out-of-town possibilities. In many ways, it's that sense of shared experience that makes it still worth continuing. That, and the love of playing music, of course.

(Neil)

On the other hand, as Montreal's micro-music industries matured, their national and international connections began to better facilitate the flow of music both in and out of the city. As a result, the international profile of Montreal improved in the last years of the nineties. The Montreal anglophone music scene produced indie bands like Pest 5000, a litany of ska bands, including Me, Mom and Morgentaler, and pop stars such as the dandified Rufus Wainwright (son of Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle), and Bran Van 3000 (who had an international hit with "Drinking in LA"). The European and North American experimental avant-garde and post-rock audiences found hope and solace in the moody guitar orchestrations of godspeed you black emperor! and its many offshoots (One-Speed Bike, A Silver Mt. Zion, Exhaust) and related bands (Molasses, Frankie Sparo) as well as artist such as sprawling guitar drones of Sam Shalabi and moody rock of Set Fire to Flames. Many of these acts recorded for local labels such as Constellation Records and the avant-garde-inclined Alien8 (and their experimental electronic offshoot, Subtractif).

Constellation is worthy of note here, as its owners' strategies and aesthetic politics are emblematic of many muiscmakers' aspirations to create an alternative cultural economy in Montreal. Run by two individuals, they focus primarily on local artists, adopting an aesthetic politics which stresses the value of craft as a way of re-enchanting the artistic process:

Constellation began releasing experimental rock music in Montreal in 1997, seeking to enact a mode of cultural production that critiques the worst tendencies of the music industry, artistic commodification, and perhaps in some tiny way, the world at large. We have attempted to evolve one possible model for the recovery of an independent music ethic, hoping to summon some real sense of indie rock in spite of its reduction to a branded slogan through corporate co-optation, its laissez-faire attitude towards the market and the means of production, and all the facile irony that helps pave the path for these content-negating trends.

Together with the musicians who release records on the label, we have worked to rekindle a critical rock music cognisant of geography and social conditions; to reflect these concerns both musically and practically by building self-sufficient local structures for performing, recording and releasing work; to hold fast to the beautiful promise of independent rock as a perpetually nascent musical form capable of uncertain, unstable, unassimilable, untarnished transmissions.

(from the Constellation website)

Prior to their move up to the Plateau/Mile End, Constellation briefly ran its operations out of a first floor apartment in Old Montreal (Le Moyne) (in a four-storey building co-owned by two members of derivative). Between 1997 and 2001, they lived, assembled the packaging for their releases (the music magazine *Wire* has called them "graphics fetishists"), and set up numerous performance nights (the *Musique Fragile* series, the organization of which they described as "curated"). There is a history here, however: By 1994, the city of Montreal had begun to recognize the value of cultural production to city life (mainly as a tourist draw), an acknowledgement that there were also an increasing

number of self-identified cultural producers living in areas such as the Plateau, and some in Old Montreal, a fact confirmed by census data (Germain and Rose, 2000). However, this shift did not make things any easier for Don and Ian to establish a proper performance space, independent of their living space:

The story of looking for a performance space, well that meant spending day after day at City Hall, and realizing how locked down the city is with respect with zoning.

(Ian)

We spent an entire year looking for a place. We chose the place we're at now to live in and run the label.

(Don)

We pretty much drew a tight perimeter circle around downtown up to Sherbrooke, Ste. Catherine and Mont Royal, because we figured that's where people were going to go on a regular basis. I mean we were imagining a performance space that would be open four or five days a week, that would actually pay the rent. We were going to get a liquor license and serve vegetarian food and let it grow as a kind of space that would be artist friendly. The main principle is that we weren't going to charge bands to play, that your overhead was low enough that you could take some chances with programming and fill the nights up with differently curated events. We had at that time a handful of musicians who we could have used.

(Ian)

Our hope was that by having a performance space and getting the word out it would become a destination place for American bands largely that would otherwise bypass Montreal, because it was a one promotion town. I mean if Greenland wasn't going to handle it, then there isn't anyone who's going to. It's partly a reaction to that and partly a reaction to pay-to-play for local bands as well.

The number of potential blocks where even on the main floor you could get a performance space was limited the Main, the Latin Quarter and St. Catherine.

There was a crackdown in 1994 on illegitimate in parties. Big chunks of the city were rezoned. So basically the only places left for performance spaces were the Main, the Latin Quarter and St. Catherine.

(Don)

The structural exclusion of operations such as Constellation from gaining a legitimate foothold in Montreal galvanized both Don and Ian, who insisted on maintaining the link between work and leisure (which were not ideologically distinct anyway) in response.

This multipurposing of space would be mirrored at the north end of the city, at godspeed's Hotel 2 Tango (173 AVan Horne), a cavernous loft above a car repair shop, which backed onto the city's northern railway line. The romance of decay would find its sonic analogue here, with godspeed evoking the ambience of post-industrial Montreal in their epic soundscapes, using a number of local found sounds to evoke a poignant and spectral portrait of a city in decline. The Hotel, like godspeed itself, is run collectively, a space prone now to a certain mythology:

Hotel 2 Tango is a huge rambling loft space hunkered-down on the wind-battered edge of Montréal's Mile-End. Behind the nondescript structure, a stone toss from the door, rusty trains rumble and screech and join the chorus of dissent emanating from within. Serving as practice space for godspeed (and home to several of the band's members), the Hotel is one of only a tiny handful of non-commercial venues in the city where live performance can be staged. Shows happen here under the radar and under constant threat of embargo by city authorities with too much power and no ideas. The token amounts of money earned at the Hotel subsidises the gear used for live shows.

(Description of Hotel 2 Tango from the Constellation website)

The scene which currently revolves around the godspeed collective incorporates elements of rock and *musique actuelle*, the latter being an experimental genre of music with firm roots in the avant-garde musical tradition in Quebec, thereby extending the band's reach into the francophone world. Out of this would emerge a variety of contacts and numerous collaborative opportunities with local and non-local musicmakers. Many

of these contacts were reaffirmed through various musical festivals, such as the Off-Jazz Fest (hosted at the Casa del Popolo and Lion D'Or) or in Victoriaville. The annual Victoriaville music festival, which takes place at a site roughly an hour east of Montreal, attracts international attention, drawing in local and international avant-garde and experimental artists, many of whom have found an aesthetic affinity with the province's avant-garde and electro-acoustic community. Another local festival, Mutek, orients itself towards the local and international music scenes. A small cohort of electronic experimentalists have gathered around this latter festival, an annual event that provides a showcase for local artists (Mitchell Akiyama, Tim Hecker/Jetone) as well as international talent.

In the case of anglophone independent music and its history in Montreal, at least as an object of scholarly analyses, it appears less visible relative to the study of the québécois independent music industry. Its "absence" from scholarly discourse is in many ways a consequence of the less formalized nature of its industries and institutions. A double disappearance is effected also through its under-representation in trade magazines (a primary source for most studies of popular music). At a social level, musicmaking's apparent weakness has to do with the scene's lack of demographic integrity due to the transience of the city's anglophones, whose stay in Montreal is often temporary. This is particularly true of those university-educated individuals who make up the larger percentage of the musical community. (According to Statistics Canada, university graduates are among the most mobile Canadians. Between 1991-1996 Québec had the highest proportion of out-migrants aged 25 and over with a university degree (33%) and anglophones counted for 50% of these graduates.)¹²

The unevenness of the anglophone musical community provides a stark contrast to that of québécois musical culture, which is often trumpeted as vibrant and healthy. In the latter case, a more explicit sense of urgency and necessity can be heard in the rhetoric and discourses informing the political dimension/directionality galvanizing the francophone community. Line Grenier has suggested, following from Straw (1991), that the notions of community and scene are two defining elements of the social organization of francophone music in the province. History is writ large through a commitment to musical traditions such as *chanson*, a practice which invokes an affective relationship to the past as a way to tie francophone musicmaking to place and the project of nation-building. In certain respects, the same sort of spatial and temporal relations are operating in the anglophone independent music community as well, although they appear less politicized and geographically unified, often adopting a kind of quietism and linking up with other scenes which are more amenable. They have the advantage of fitting into a network of promotion, distribution and touring the default language of which is English. That is to say, that at the same time the francophone musical community has established alliances with other franco-musicians from around the globe, anglophone independent musicians have found an affinity, and in fact have also constructed transregional networks of distribution and marketing, with other like-minded musicmakers. Extending their scope beyond the confines Montreal to form a transregional community that is much more global in reach, has meant confronting a fundamental problem: in what ways do we remain committed to musicmaking in Montreal? And more importantly, how do we demonstrate this commitment? Efrim suggested how godspeed negotiated this position which had adopted a dual focus:

I know that as a band we're trying to make ourselves part of a larger community. That's why it's weird for us now. We're operating outside of the city more than in it. It's weird. It's like a shirt that doesn't fit right. We feel when we go to Europe and the U.S. we feel isolated. What we're trying to do now is make contact with musicians in other countries, open up some kind of dialogue. Take a model of what we've done here and expand it a little bit. Lessen stuff like competition between bands and suggest that there should be a more concerted effort to avoid media interaction. We should create our own media and means of expression. That's our focus now. We're not exerting that much energy to make our presence known in this city. Not networking in this city. Which is weird. Whether or not that will pay off I don't know. The Hotel 2 Tango will continue to stagger through its own history.

The various elements supporting an anglophone musical community in the province emerge within (and in some cases against) the capricious and turbulent politics of the province. At the same time, the community's place in Montreal's broader sociomusical milieu has created a cultural space in which a diverse range of musical worlds interact, influencing one another in various ways. Many of these musical practices are deliberately small-scale and are geared towards integrating into, or conforming to, the commercial demands of the dominant recording industry. Ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin describes this type of musical formation as a "micromusic," by which he means "the small units within big music cultures" (1993: 11). These micromusics are of the sort, as Lewis and Malm suggest, produced and consumed "below the national level of government and corporate activities" (1992: 22), although national and global forces obviously have some bearing on their political motivations, eventual shape and potential "reach." Keith Negus puts this in more prosaic terms, borrowing from Finnegan, when he suggests that

(i)t is here, in the "hidden" world of everyday music-making, where sounds move beyond their commercial commodity status

and slide between the spaces that open up between the local, the national, and the global. Here music is continually being used to create a series of affective alliances. These alliances constitute pan-regional spheres of communication that are outside of the nation-state regimes and not reducible to the commercial marketing categories of the music business.

(Negus, 1998: 188)

The suggestion Lewis and Malm, as well as Negus, make about the “invisibility” of these non-commercial micromusics does not mean that they are missing the infrastructure, audience or institutions (radio, print media); in other words, all those elements required for the maintenance of any cultural apparatus supporting musicmaking. In the case of anglophone independent music, in fact, there is a vibrant and active musical culture that has provided a rich sociomusical experience to participants who are active in all facets of musicmaking. Many of them are ambivalent about the supposed virtues of remaining invisible. They do recognize the difficulty of choosing how to be represented, however, as Efrim suggested: “I don’t have an interest in being wilfully obscure. I don’t think that giving interviews to everyone who asks means you’re being wilfully obscure. There’s a third option there. I don’t know exactly what that is, but I’m struggling with it.”

As was seen in those changes wrought upon the sociomusical experience of francophone musicmakers within Quebec, social and industrial infrastructures shifted significantly over the latter half of the twentieth century which had significant bearing on musicmaking generally. When considered in relation to changes in political and economic conditions in Montreal, the perception of The emergence of a celebrity apparatus across various francophone media consolidated the industry and fostered careers in ways which confirmed its strength and commitment to francophone culture generally and Quebecois cultural identity specifically. And although these

transformations are more apparent in the context of mainstream francophone music, they have an effect on the sort of routes independent musicians travel. The industrial and institutional structures supporting independent musicmaking—from bars/clubs such as Barfly and the Casa, to radio stations such as CKUT and CBC, records shops such as Esoterik and L’Oblique, to record distributors like Cargo (and now Fusion III)—lend the city’s musical culture a sense of continuity and stability. If one fails, another appears, attesting to an irrepressible desire among musicmakers to continue being creative. The city provides the barest of resources according to many musicians, but they soldier on irrespective of the disappearance of a favourite club, or a once indispensable distributor like Cargo. Venues singled out for upholding the independent entrepreneurial spirit, such as Hotel 2 Tango, the Casa del Popolo/La Salla Rosa, or the praise given labels such as Constellation or Alien8, say as much about their commitment to the scene as they do about musicmaking’s deep-rooted ability to transform individuals, groups and places.

Let me state here that throughout this project there is less emphasis placed on texts/works-as-products. Instead, discursiveness, materiality and experiences are taken up as key dimensions of musicmaking in the city. Outlining the various horizons which shape the kinds of activities and strategies associated musicmaking in Montreal might be construed as placing too much emphasis on the musical epiphenomenon rather than the phenomenon of music itself. However, to presume musicmaking is just about the production of musical objects (such as cassettes, albums, compact discs or live performances) is to ignore the various “background” conditions necessary for musicmaking to occur in the first place, allowing it to assert itself and subsequently flourish (or wither as the case may be). And while musicmaking does have as one of its

primary goals the manufacture, distribution and sale of records as products/commodities, its practitioners, while rarely articulating it in such precise terms, think of it as a process, a dynamic, robust and meaningful social activity which heavily informs their experience of Montreal. Finnegan describes this as “practice,” while Lawrence Grossberg (1997), in getting at the multiple levels, contexts and motivations for musicmaking in rock, suggests we think of it as a formation:

(A rock formation is) meant to signal a specific material, spatial and temporal identity.... Rock’s identity and effects... depend on more than its specific textuality or sound. To describe rock culture as a formation is to constitute it as a material - discursive and non-discursive - context, a complex and always specific organization of cultural and non-cultural practices which produces particular effects - specific forms and organizations of boredom and fun, of pleasure and pain, of meaning and nonsense.

(Grossberg: 230-231)

Grossberg’s work has provoked a number of analyses of rock culture, many of which take up his notion of “radical context” to underline the proper way in which rock formations can be socially and politically situated, and more importantly, what sort of methodology should be adopted for a well-rounded study. By conceiving of cultural practice within a “radical context” Grossberg is pointing towards those links made between “points, events or practices...within a multidimensional and multi-directional field” (1992: 50). Grossberg believes it is misleading to isolate a cultural practice outside the historical structures and networks of everyday life in which it embedded; context is a necessary means by which we make sense of social life for political academic work. It entails laying out a map of power—a “map that offers ways of recognizing and combating oppressive hierarchical regimes within a field” and it is one way in which the historical and structural dimensions of cultural activity can be traced (Kirschner, 1998: 258).

Radical context is a useful term as it helps to illustrate that those seemingly extramusical factors (politics, economics, ethnicity, gender, and in the case of Montreal, language) are always already embedded in the practices associated with musicmaking.

As the work on cultural industries in Quebec roughly sketched out above demonstrates, politics, economics and language are factors which mediate musical practice at a material and a symbolic level in Montreal. The degree to which they affect musical activity is contingent upon the vicissitudes of an increasingly globalized cultural economy, which strongly influences musicmaking in Canada, Quebec, and Montreal. The local, national and global, existing as discursive constructs, geopolitical realities and contexts for action, are intimately bound up with one another. They can be understood as overlapping and interacting through a complicated set of relations wherein they are articulated each to each rather asymmetrically. There is little new in this observation; it is part of the orthodox approach to the study of culture in an increasingly globalized economy. It is a truism, however, that remains relevant to any discussion of musicmaking in Montreal and serves as an aid to a map of musical activity which pinpoints how musicmakers function in a city where language, politics and economics are so strongly embedded in all aspects of cultural production. These complex interrelations have determined how musicmakers adapt to the concomitant emergence of new contexts for cultural production, the reorganization of social relations as well as changes in the technological apparatuses which affect music production, distribution, transmission, marketing and consumption. They are all overarching factors determining how a rock formation such as anglophone independent music continues to function and effectively

respond to change in a city where politics, language, and the economy inform so much of the rhetoric and experience of musicmaking.

Radical context is a useful term, then, serving to illustrate that those seemingly extramusical factors (politics, economics, ethnicity, gender, and in the case of Montreal, language) are always already embedded in the practices associated with musicmaking (many of these points are taken up by Grenier in her work on musical communities in Quebec). However, Grossberg often overlooks the grounded aspects of music-making by appealing to a form of material abstraction. Tony Kirschner suggests that this type of theoretical model would be more successful and well-rounded if complemented by empirical detail (258). Kirschner has taken some of these elements to establish an approach to the study of music through what he calls materialist ethnography, an extension of what he calls “cosmopolitan ethnography”:

While traditional ethnography might focus on the occurrences in a particular city, cosmopolitan ethnography concentrates on the motion of music-making, seeking to understand the common paths, the routes that ‘pull’ and point of blockage—understand that is, how centres or alliances get constituted.

(261)

This method doesn’t have to restrict itself entirely to ethnography, however, as it is a much more effective and (potentially) well-rounded qualitative approach which can incorporate a range of research strategies.

A significant strength of this method is the manner in which it pulls the focus away from identity and out towards a consideration of broader movements across space. The experiential in this sense is loosened up and can be thought about spatially, as it is not anchored solely to more bounded notions of subjectivity. In Montreal for instance, the movement of Montreal’s scene from pub to pub and bar to bar has never been a change

motivated by simple choice. Working as a music writer recounting Montreal's early scene, Brendan Kelly in 1985 provided a brief list of club spaces that had been closed down by the police, condemned or abandoned for newer clubs which were more amenable to the needs of a flourishing Montreal musical community (Kelly, 1985). He traces the movement of live performance from Old Montreal (364 St. Paul) to "new wave" dance bars downtown (Blues, Glace) to Parc Ave. (Le Mirage - lasting only a year but an active performance space which accommodated a number of new groups and performers).¹³ Many of these clubs opened and closed according to audience demand, and perhaps more significantly, in response to threats of closure or loss of liquor licenses. Punk performances, perceived as a threat, were continually suspended or placed under suspicion, as were the clubs that hosted them. At the time, journalists and musicians marshaled together whatever forces they could to claim a space where the music could be heard, free of the police and authorities, relocating when pushed out of other areas, pulled towards spaces that were more amenable. What these sorts of strategies mean for the researcher after qualitative detail is that he or she "maps" the rock terrain, "looking for constellations of power to be used in subsequent material analyses" (262). In the eyes of those who wrote about and made up the scene in the late eighties, these closures and clampdowns were understood as evidence of yet another pitched battle in the eternal struggle, the "push and pull," between youthful rebellion and the "straight" authorities, a view which saw French and English youth allied against a common enemy.

In order to support this process of musical mapping, Kirschner borrows from Massey the term "power geometry" to denote the uneven distribution of chances for mobility across a given space. He extends this definition: "Articulations of power that

restrict movement can be analyzed empirically (ethnography) or materially.

Cosmopolitan ethnography enables one to create a strategic account of the experience, one that can guide a subsequent, complementary material investigation.” (263). This particular brand of ethnography is complemented by a material analyses which can effectively describe the combination of ideological, historical and economic forces, mapping out the complex interplay of power relations as they affect individuals, here it is musicians, in their everyday existence. He concludes that materialist ethnography should play the ethnographic account off of the material map for in the end they are mutually constituted (264). As he suggests, previous studies of local scenes as territorially bounded entities often tended to reduce complex flows to a form of local determinism, one set apart from more expansive, glacial (and therefore “invisible”) forces of globalization or nationalism (as the case might be in Quebec). By using this combination of materialist and qualitative methods, he aims to provide an analysis of scenes based on the specific articulation of cosmopolitan flows and social mobility. Peter Jackson (1989) has said of this materialist approach:

Adopting a materialist approach (one can argue) that the explanation for any ideology or cultural practice must be sought in specific historical and geographical circumstances. History is conceived of not as the simple passage of time, but as a dynamic process in which cultures are actively forged by real men and women. Similarly, geography is conceived of not as a featureless landscape on which events simply unfold, but as a series of spatial structures which provide a dynamic context for the processes and practices that give shape and form to culture.

(48)

It is ultimately a tool which can describe both the social and spatial practices through which “people *handle* the changing raw material of their lives. It examines the extent to which place is a significant component in the production of and reproduction of culture”

(ibid) and can illuminate those factors which curtail or expand the ability of cultural producers to do just that.

The materialist analysis proposed here can be a useful tool for the analysis of Montreal's musicmaking, particularly as it can be used to map out the processes of exclusion and inclusion influencing musicmaking in the city. It is also one way of marking historical shifts. Rick, there at punk's first rumblings, roughly sketched out the scene's early inclusive pluralism, where francophones and anglophones, musicians and audiences would appear to interact freely, where difference was imagined to be less about distinctions drawn between language groups and defined more along generational or class lines:

A broken down store-front in old Montréal, 364 St. Paul, put on the occasional ramshackle event. Performers were indistinguishable from audience members, but audience members tried their darnedest to distinguish themselves from the average civilian.

(Trembles, 1998: 6)

The very first punk show seemed very mixed because anything goes at that point. Everybody was improvising and experimenting. Whatever you could exploit of yours that was different, you should that to the extreme. Everybody in their extreme differences joined together as a bunch of misfits. One of the first punk rockers I saw in town had an FLQ t-shirt in lightning letters. That kinda shocked me. In high school I was into Hendrix and stuff, had flares and long hair and I saw this maniac with spiky hair wandering down the street and everybody did a double-take... I guess it was the equivalent of a swastika, or the localized version of it. It was very effective.

(Rick)

What I remember, what I understood about the independence movement was that it was a social movement. And so I think perhaps the francophone people, not so much musicians as other fine artists, who perhaps did a lot of the postering or some other aspect of that. Maybe language has something to do with it there, but those kinds of conversations were something that I respected

but did not understand. But I did definitely equate it with a movement motivated by socialist reasons.... There was a conscious attempt to push down barriers. That was what is more about. We were determined to be apolitical, in the sense that we wanted to avoid having any kind of identification with government or politics.

(Louise)

These comments indicate two spatial and aesthetic relationships. The first speaks of the localized and healthy pluralism of the 'early days'; the second of an aesthetic allusion to English punks' use of the swastika as shock tactic and how that gesture was appropriated locally (by a francophone no less) (see Hebdige, 1979). Here there is a fundamental tension between internal and external influences. Already that organic sense of regionalism had come to be defined by "localizing" aesthetic practices drawn from far away places. But scenes are never pure distillations of a localized set of practices, local histories or aesthetic traditions. Louise's comment situates the scene at the time somewhat differently, thinking more about a kind of class solidarity that supersedes linguistic tensions. However, in both commentaries, there always remains a trace of the "other," a residual reference to some place far away (the imagined utopia of New York, for instance, the French next door) which has to at once to be incorporated, rhetorically, discursively and imaginatively.

Although most of these bands found an aesthetic affinity and sense of social solidarity with others making music in places such as New York, Toronto or Detroit, the peculiar space provided for cultural production in Montreal is one in which regional insularity has given way (visibly) to the inclusion of outsiders, of "others." Louise suggested that in the mid-eighties she recalls a point at which the sort of regionalism which Rick alludes to had started to dissolve. She remembers noting that those who were

involved in the scene no longer came from Montreal or its suburbs; rather, they were anglophones coming from Ontario, Nova Scotia, British Columbia, New England and New York. Some musicmakers at the time saw them as part of a middle-class diaspora resettling in Quebec for study or escape. Louise suggested it was a sign of “a new mobility, a desire to live in a different city.” “This,” she continued, “was something new—people who came to Montreal had heard stories, had heard about the cheap rent and the cheaper tuition.” The image of Montreal as subcultural hub was beginning to take a shape which would attract musicmakers from that point on. As Louise recounted it, the anglophone scene’s boundaries in the mid-eighties were becoming more porous at the same time it was becoming a more desirable place to make music. The scene was no longer just about Montreal and its suburbs. For her, a new sort of cosmopolitanism seemed to be asserting itself which meant that these “others” brought new sensibilities to bear on musicmaking (and cultural production generally) in Montreal. However, distinctions were still being drawn along language lines, divisions which, in some cases, appeared even starker.

Gen, originally from Ottawa, suggested much the same thing about the contemporary scene, but with a greater awareness of the supposed invisibility of a francophone scene (she did much of the French press for Pest 5000) While aesthetically-aligned with the tastes and stylistic sensibilities of Anglophones

, it is nonetheless perceived as “other” and, hence, ultimately unknowable:

Francophone and anglophone is very divided. I have very little knowledge of the other side. Although there seems to be some blending right now with the godspeed scene. They have francophone members, so being such a large collective that sort of invites mingling. There’s like a whole thing going on over there, and I’m like: “Hey, what’s going on over there?” I went to a gig

that was totally francophone, absolutely one hundred percent francophone. There's a whole college scene of kids that are into funky, weird punk rock avant-garde and you'll never meet them. I went to this loft gig and it was eerie. I feel like I'm in my community, except I don't know any of the people and they're all speaking French. There was this great band called Cayenne playing and it's weird because I don't even feel like I'm in my own city. It signals a strong division I think.

(Gen)

That sense of the familiar being made unfamiliar, that feeling of estrangement and otherworldliness Gen feels is a contrast in many respects to Don and Ian's comments about musicmaking. They state that the explicit goal of Constellation (both the label and the performance space) was to provide the opportunity for "mingling" between francophone and anglophone, indicating a self-conscious decision on their part to be more inclusive:

I mean those crowds mingling (French and English) is an affirmation that we're making the right kind of aesthetic decisions along the way, i.e. that we're embracing and curating stuff at Musique Fragile that has an appeal to an arts-oriented culture in Montreal that transcends those cultural and artistic boundaries.

(Ian)

There is hardly a consensus, however, on how language politics determines the sociomusical experience. Consider, for example, the following divergent assessments:

In my experience, I've always felt a divide between the anglo and franco communities but as soon as you make the effort to speak French new doors are opened and Montreal becomes a more rich and exciting place to live. I think too many anglophones take the easy route—come here to live and enjoy the low cost of living, wonderful arts and cultural scene and cuisine—and miss out on the French communities producing equally interesting art, music, dance etc. I've been to a few parties where I was the only anglophone and it's pretty hilarious because we are constantly told in one form or another that we are so different and yet everyone drinks the same Blonde ou Rousse. It's hilarious! I feel a sense of elation, relief, and comfort when speaking French to new franco friends and I hear the same thing from them. The francophone

people I speak with are just as eager to speak and learn English. There are always exceptions and there are always people who are close-minded, shy, stuck in their ways - and they will unfortunately miss out on some very wonderful things.

(Krista)

Too many bands sing in English. I guess this has something to do with the international market or whatever but underground music shouldn't have anything to do with that. Kids should sing in French if they're more comfortable doing so and ignore trying to get big or some kind of crap like that. There is almost no English representation at French shows which is ridiculous because some of the best bands in this city almost exclusively play to a French audience. If the English university kids would realize that French bands aren't necessarily shitty they would hear some great new music.

(Greg)

I have friends who say that not many English-speaking people go to see French bands—and I guess this is true some times, but I don't see people fighting at shows about language issues. The hardcore/metal scene seems to be more linguistically mixed than the indie rock scene.

(Tim)

I was at a show one day and all French bands were playing and being an anglophone, a girl I knew who is francophone came up to me and told me that she was really happy to see a group of anglophone kids (me and two others) at the show. Because as she has noticed and I've noticed as well, certain music scenes tend to be polarized. It's rare that you see a lot of anglophones at a French punk show but more common to see French kids at a show where an out of town American or Canadian band will be playing. I don't know if this makes much sense, but I wish I could see more anglophones at a French punk show, because it really divides the scene. Making it US and THEM. Actually scratch that, what I'd really like to see is more English bands playing shows with French bands as well. Now I'm not saying that it NEVER happens, it has just been rare in my experience to see this unfold. Perhaps its easier for me to go to both shows because I understand both languages, but I know a lot of bilingual kids who don't, so there's no excuse for them.

(Eleni)

Malcolm, another respondent, suggested that language politics are embedded in the city's musical infrastructure:

The only way I see it played out is that there is more of a built-in audience for francophone bands and artists—and that's only logical since they are the majority (and since a lot of anglo hipsters are too cheap or lazy to go out!)

Anouk, a francophone who chooses to work mainly in English, sees it as a problem which is both infrastructural and social:

People tend to cluster with their kin. There are those anglophones who are interested in the French culture and I think they are better perceived than French who go for anglo culture. For some reason it's more cute. But I don't see many French people getting season tickets for the Centaur, you know! I think we acknowledge the other's existence but that's it.

In her view, language politics operated at an even deeper level, suggesting that there is a real divide in terms of funding for the arts: “Only French projects are backed-up by SODEC and MUSICACTION. Quotas on commercial radio prioritizes French. I'm real bored with politics... NEXT!”¹⁴ Her view of the vitality of musicmaking in Montreal generally offers a slightly more complex view of how things operate, particularly for francophones:

There are many, many, many good bands in Montreal. The two main cultures (the two solitudes) are barely, or not at all, aware of what goes on in the other's backyard. Dommage... The music venues now charge the artists (the ones who play original material) to play within their walls. That's not the case elsewhere. I don't know that we have a culture where some people would go out to a bar XYZ to discover a new group... People go see their friends, and bands harass their friends! There are a few cool contests (significant for musicians) for “French music” (I'm baffled by this idiocy, music is music), but few for anglos.... Many contests pole the public, so no matter how good you are... harass away, again... (We don't participate in contests anymore!). The weekly papers such as the *Montreal Mirror*, *Ici, Voir* and *Hour* have power in the minds of musicians that are starting out... A mention (a good

review) means a world to bands, and the music critics are very solicited. I'm not certain there is a real demographic impact on sales when you get a critic in *Voir*. The government support for musicians is geared towards the micro industry that represents the province of Quebec, there is no real support to radiate what comes out of here. Older musicians have many projects, studio gigs, cover bands to make ends meet. I think the true sense of faith can be applied to bands that persevere in their original ideas.

Stephane, another francophone respondent, asserts the personal importance of Montreal and highlights at the same time a paradox felt by many people who choose to sing in French:

(Montreal's) a place I can't quit for too long. I miss it all the way if I'm leaving for too long. Sometimes I'd like to see the local scene being more consolidated... but, what can you do? There's a lot of jealousy and purism between bands. The French language is really fragile in town in a certain way. It's being like Moncton (NB): all the French people are bilingual... but I couldn't tell the same about anglos... I don't want to be rude but the reality seems to be that way. When you sing in French, journalists are asking you why. If you are anglo and you sing in English, nobody will mention it, politically I mean. It doesn't answer the question really but it reflects how Montreal is in a certain way.

(Stephane)

Many of the interviewees' comments indicated an ability and desire to identify, or even draw, distinctions between French and English musical worlds in order that they might be brought together, however temporarily. They presume both an aesthetic disposition as well as a social position from which, as Don and Ian believe, a broad-based inclusive musical community can be actualized effectively (again Efrim also acknowledged that he had no idea how this "hope" could be realized).

The unequal mobility and uneven flow that Massey, via Kirschner, speaks of are indices of a power dynamic which has significant bearing on the shape of a cultural landscape. It suggests that the identification and navigation of a network's principles of

exclusion and inclusion requires the acquisition and retention of certain skills and cultural competencies. Most of these are acquired through learning, a sort of “street cred” in the case of punk and independent music, which if properly applied can lead to the mastery of a specific range of sociomusical knowledges and codes, the accumulation and appropriate use of what Bourdieu has called cultural capital.¹⁵ This can be understood as part of a more general process in which the accumulation of cultural capital can facilitate an actor’s successful insertion into a specific cultural milieu, whereby they acquire the appropriate “tools” which can continue to facilitate mobility, as well as consolidate their position or role within these multiple terrains. That milieu itself is composed of numerous social networks which criss-cross both the real and imagined cultural space of Montreal. Gen suggested that community radio, which she participated in Ottawa and Montreal, provided a social network which allowed her to meet musicians and eventually join a number of bands. In the case of Efrim and the godspeed members, it was Concordia University’s Film and Visual Arts department which provided opportunities for like-minded musicians to meet and possibly enter into various social and musical networks. Don suggested that his meeting up with Ian, who was already submerged in a nascent scene through his band Sofa, made it easier for him to connect:

I moved back and forth between Montreal and Toronto and I was really never part of a scene. I’ve always been a bit of an island, so that whatever friends I’ve been hanging out with were never really into music. I was involved more as an undergrad in Nova Scotia. It was only after meeting Ian, who was already really involved, it was really easy to ‘plug in’ through him. It wasn’t difficult.

John Cotterell (1996) suggests these social networks function to support social and cultural activities over time, simultaneously reaffirming the singular and unique value of being local in the minds of the network’s members:

Network ties link the person to others via the activity of establishing and maintaining social relations. The social network structures thus formed become the delivery system for social support; thus proximity-seeking behaviour is expressed in the activity of maintaining social network ties, visiting friends, writing letters, making phone calls. As a person moves through the lifecycle, s/he is part of a network of supportive ties.

(17)

Notably a person's social network changes "in response to geographical, historical, and cultural influences" (ibid). Montreal has provided a space in which these various responses have produced a range of networks and cultural practices that emerged out of an entrenched sense of difference, a sense of division that reproduces itself in spatial and social terms. These divisions, while firmly embedded at the level of the social geography of Montreal, are also borne out in symbolic divisions. In the context of anglophone musicmaking this has meant both a sense of continuity (as part of a bohemian tradition) as well as change (shifting sites for musical performance, rehearsal spaces and music-makers themselves leaving the city). What makes this model more effective in describing the changes within networks is the introduction of time, where lifecycles become integral to explaining the shifts in behaviour, attitudes and dispositions which can account for an individual's investment and degree of participation in a chosen network. Rick, an active member of the city's burgeoning punk scene who helped determine how these social networks were shaped and maintained, has moved out of them as a fully involved member, doing the occasional live show (preferring now to concentrate on his animation). Louise, a longtime employee at CKUT, was part of the same community radio milieu that allowed Gen to connect with local musicians and form her own musical projects (and Patti from derivative was hired by the CBC, which often sees, as one respondent put it, CKUT as a "farm team"). Institutional sites such as

community radio foster the opportunity for more interaction between different musical worlds, and at the same time, provide a bridge between different generations allowing for certain forms of continuity to be realized, certain local knowledge to be transferred.

The concept of “network” is central to understanding the movement of people, ideas and objects through urban spaces. According to Charles Kadushin (1976) a network is a “set of social objects onto which is mapped a set of relationships or ‘flows’ not necessarily in a 1:1 fashion” (107). They are informal and are usually made up of emergent relations which are not formally instituted. In the field of cultural production, Kadushin suggests, they are not always visible; instead, they are interstitial, tending “to link different social units such as different universities, publishers, authors, and the like” (108). Although he is discussing the art world, specifically addressing its literary dimensions, it retains its relevance here for alluding to those institutional sites and links which, whether marginal or mainstream, are central to the constitution of cultural spaces generally. As Efrim, Don, Ian and Gen claimed, Concordia was a place where many bands found their members. At the same time, the university also provided opportunities for those same bands to perform. Rick also stated that Concordia during the early eighties was the place where they played to some of their largest audiences, performing at events set up to welcome new and old students back to school. Both McGill and Concordia provided sporadic showcases for local bands to play (Trembles: 12; see also Kelly, 1985). They served as sites where new connections could be made, where social, aesthetic and working relationships could be established, as well as places where older friendships and artistic affinities and networks could be reaffirmed and renewed.

Although these are illustrations of the positive aspects of social networks, one should be mindful of the fact that these networks, like most networks, operate according to principles of exclusion and inclusion, with mechanisms in place that an actor is expected to manipulate to his or her advantage in order to move through these channels with greater ease with the appearance of doing so effortlessly. These networks have both a real and symbolic dimension and can function to circumscribe desires, aspirations and career trajectories as well as an actor's physical movement through the city, further evidence of how mobility can be constrained by both symbolic and material restrictions. Ruth Finnegan suggests that a "structure" underlies the seemingly surface activities ascribed to musicmaking. They are organized in particular ways, with their own economies and systems of exchange, producing and reproducing a specific constellation of values indigenous to a particular cultural economy. The use of the word "hidden" to describe these activities is suggestive of the somewhat invisible aspects of musicmaking in any city. There is plenty of visual evidence to suggest that an active music scene exists; plenty of handbills and posters attest to the persistence of music as a fact of city life. What Finnegan means by "invisible" are the acts of musical production which happen "backstage," to borrow from Goffman, those events which occur outside of the live performance of music, or, in the case of certain performances, take place in non-traditional venues (church basements, for example). In a city such as Montreal, this is a particularly apt description. A certain percentage of independent music is made and heard in abandoned loft spaces, bedrooms, makeshift and ad hoc performance spaces such as temporarily converted art galleries such as Stornaway (the American Devices played a show in a psychiatric ward at Douglas Hospital). It is in these "hidden" spaces

that francophones and anglophones often meet. The quote from Constellation privileges the clandestine nature of musicmaking, when they declare that “(s)hows take place under the radar, in our own spaces, without official sanction, and everyone gets along.” Louise suggested that during the mid-eighties it was in rehearsal spaces that anglophone and francophone musicians swapped war stories, shared equipment (and drugs), rather than the live gig, where there has been only occasional overlap between French and English bands:

One thing that brought francophones and anglophones together was the drugs. It was not so much the actual playing, but the accoutrements of being in a band. Getting your stuff repaired, getting stuff stolen, trying to find out who did it, and scoring drugs. That’s when the two solitudes meet.

(Louise)

In many ways this is still true today, as Gen suggested (although drugs are no longer shared, “just beer”). She notes that many francophone and anglophone members will show their solidarity and mutual respect by making the odd appearance at a live performance of the bands they share rehearsal space with. Anouk, a francophone and a relative newcomer to musicmaking, praises those moments where French and English come together:

When we get to meet, it’s great! There is a pleasure in speaking, joking, interacting in a language that is not your own... I think anglophones are less prone to this pleasure, an older generation at least. Progress is made on both sides, though I still find morons who won’t learn the other’s language and think they’re being political.... There is uncertainty on the issue of language, for example: I write in English, for the type of rock I play I just think it sounds better, and anyway that’s how it comes to me... Well it still happens when I go and ask bands to play a gig with us to be asked if our lyrics are in French or English, and there is often a slight hesitation when I tell... I think patriotic art is a choice, not an obligation. I find young French musicians are confused in their convictions, or priority. That’s my opinion...

(Anouk)

The “pleasure” Anouk singles out here gives credence to Finnegan’s insistence that musicmaking is above all a social activity. Finnegan is less concerned with static musical texts or works, directing her attention towards the more dynamic processes of musicmaking in the city, particularly among amateur and hobbyist musicians. It is a view of music and place not as fixed and bounded texts or things, but as social activities involving relations between people, musical sounds, images and artifacts, and the material environment.¹⁶ Most of her study is dedicated to outlining the patterns structuring musical practice by noting their bearing on both social continuity and individual choices. To this end, she suggests, “local music is a matter of active collective practice rather than just a passive mass-controlled consumption or the solitary contemplation of musical works” (297). Thus, local musicians are linked not just by shared views or emotions; rather, they connect through social practices.

Inasmuch as Finnegan seeks to map out the spatial nature of the social practices contained within music making in Milton Keynes, she also considers the temporal dimensions of music practices:

Local musical practices depend indeed on individuals’ connections but also have a certain abiding structure over and above the links of particular individuals; so when one set of links - or bands or clubs - dissolve others can be forged in their place following the same tradition.

(305)

Both the temporal and spatial relations defining musical practice are elaborations of pathways. Replacing the rather mechanical and two-dimensional connotations of the network, the notion of pathways provides a way of rhetorically linking routes to routines, dimensions of musicmaking which can be understood as having a certain symbolic and

affective depth. Pathways differ from social networks because “such pathways form one important—if often unstated—framework for people’s participation in urban life, something overlapping with, but more permanent and structured than, the personal networks in which individuals also participate.” (323). As to how one enters these pathways, or what keeps one on these pathways, Finnegan states:

There seems, then, to be no single answer to why particular people find themselves on one or another of the established musical pathways, leading them in directions shared with many others but still favoured by only a minority of the population at large. A whole series of factors can come in - some seemingly just matters of individual accident - and those people perceiving their choices as unfettered personal ones certainly have one part of the truth. Musical paths are voluntary, something essentially self-chosen not primarily for monetary reasons but in some sense for their own sake, something too which demands continual work and commitment to balance the undoubted satisfactions. But to this awareness of free choice must also be added the patterns of constraints and opportunities that--sometimes partly outside the actors’ own awareness - hope to draw individuals towards or away from particular paths, or shape the way they tread them, chief among these the influences of gender, of age, of stage in the lifecycle, the link to various other social groupings and...family musical background.

(316-317)

To these extramusical factors can be added language, a central factor which determines how much, or to what degree, one can participate in Montreal’s music scene and through which musical worlds one can move more easily. While Finnegan does not address the restrictions that language pose to musicians specifically, her assessment of degrees of participation does suggest some element of power, however slight, that motivates and influences cultural practice. Perhaps an easier way to think about how power is played out spatially is through Massey’s notion of power geometry. It is as Kirschner suggests, “foregrounding the articulations of power that restrict movement in a given field, thus

politicizing the term local” (262). It refers to the uneven distribution of chances for mobility across space, indicating that factors such as class, gender, race, sexual preference, ages, location, occupation limit the ability to fully participate in an urban context (261). In Montreal, many respondents suggested that while trying to create new musical worlds, they accepted, for the most part, the already established routes through the city, unconsciously and consciously maintaining the boundaries between the francophone and anglophone worlds. Mobility was circumscribed by a view held by both francophone and anglophone musicmakers that the city was rather firmly divided into French and English zones.

The articulation of power, Kirschner argues, can be measured empirically through ethnography as well a materialist analysis of the built environment –think of clubs, pubs, rehearsal spaces). It entails laying out a map of power—a “map that offers ways of recognizing and combating oppressive hierarchical regimes within a field” (258) and it is one way in which the historical and structural dimensions of cultural activity can be traced. While this definition of a map of power is rooted in a political economy of cultural production and its bearing on sociospatial relations, it obscures aspects of choice, how an actor makes a place mean what it does through a sense of belonging, and how the nuances of that process itself might be affected by everyday decisions. It downplays the experiential in other words. At the same time it does not adequately consider the symbolic dimensions of social, cultural and spatial practice. This displaces the discursive aspects of musicmaking and neglects to consider how they shape the experience of place. Certainly, the manner in which Montreal’s local scene is figured symbolically by its participants has changed over time (contrast Louise’s view that of Gen’s for instance).

These imaginings are suggestive, however, of the way in which the scene's members draw their own maps, delimiting territory and establishing boundaries in sometimes competing sometimes complementary senses of place and belonging and more specifically, "the local":

There was a part of early punk that was about certain regionality, this is the sound of such and such a city. And just on that alone sometimes records would come out. Loser city here is interesting, they're desperate, there's nothing happening. The more bored and desolate things were the more of a plus it was 'coz the band was fighting so hard to get out of it and there'd be more rage to it.

I do feel there is an anglophone band clique and it's really extremely ghettoized to the point of suffocation.

(Rick)

The view of (imposed) marginalization that Rick wants to fight against is in contrast to the willful marginality, or what might be seen as an ambivalence as regards marginality, expressed in a more contemporary experience of the city:

Constellation was very much about Montreal from the very beginning. We had no idea, no preconceived plan and really no connections outside of Montreal by which to extend Constellation. I mean we had no idea how the network was going to evolve. The thing was very much a work in progress from the beginning. Our main mandate from the beginning was to chart local stuff.

(Ian)

Not to say there was ever lack of desire to take it outside of Montreal. It was just all built around Montréal. We started off as a performance space. That was the idea at first. For a long litany of reasons the performance didn't get off the ground.

(Don)

In 1994 I still found Montreal to be very insular. People weren't thinking of how to get themselves out of Montréal, not necessarily physically but just their material, their recording, making contacts, playing shows in other cities. I found that they were just peddling around. Which is fine because it creates a local community, more local shows. But I found people to be depressed, not happy about that.

We (Pest/derivative records) weren't really concerned with the local scene. We assumed people wouldn't come see us. Not because we were being oh so typical "Oh God no one will come." We're not going to worry about that, we're just going play and do stuff. We'll do little modest shows and not worry about turning into the next best thing, like the Me, Mom and Morgentaler syndrome. It's not going to be a priority, we're going to put out our little 7-inches and we're just going to exist.

(Gen)

You're glad to be based in Mtl. for many practical reasons: cheap rents, lots of used gear, (some) venues, media (if you can get their attention), lots of practice space, geography (close to southern Ontario, five hours to T.O., three to Quebec City, two to Ottawa, two to the U.S.) Imagine being based in Newfoundland? Northern Manitoba? Still, to put it simply, musicians are much more proud of Montreal than it is of us. Perhaps if we had a lobby group that could attest to our financial contributions to the city (Ha!). Of course, you get a much greater sense of city identity when you're outside of it. I can attest to that many times over, where you're in Swift Current or Trois Rivières or Sydney or Jasper: the poster saying your band's name and "From Montreal" next to it still means something. Perhaps it's those who trod those roads before us that adds to the mystique.

(Neil)

Although there were competing definitions of "the local," with each respondent offering their own particular orientation and prescriptions as to how it "should" or "could" become more dynamic, they each assume an awareness of how the scene operates. They also imply an attempt to inscribe new pathways onto the cultural terrain of Montreal, imposing a sense of direction through the creation of new pathways, rerouting others, or even extending existing ones beyond the confines of Montreal itself. Pathways, as each of these variations suggest, serve as the social, geographical, historical, cultural, ideological means and methods deployed to negotiate a position or privileged vantage point in which to be heard from inside (and from outside) a particular musical culture. They serve as communicative channels that link routes to routines. Pathways

provide opportunities for a number of physical and imaginative encounters which reinforce one another and ultimately guarantee the survival of a musical culture across the various yet disparate institutional sites through which it is produced. Pathways are examples of the cognitive maps people deploy to organize and make sense of a certain space, a symbolic classification of a certain set of spatial relationships.

They form broad routes set out, as it were, across the city. They tend to be invisible to others, but for those who follow them they constitute a clearly laid out thoroughfare both their activities and relationships and for the meaningful structuring of their actions in space and time.

(Finnegan: 323)

Gen described these pathways as “habit trails,” which can be thought of as examples of the invisible structures within which people conduct their lives.

The habit trails are really important. You only go to a certain number of clubs, regularly. Jailhouse, I know where that is, I can go there anytime I want, I know who’s going to be there. I don’t feel afraid. I don’t have to go out of my way. I don’t even know where the habit trails are on the French side. Habits trails here are Barfly, Blue Dog, Blizzart. My habit trail included Isart, Constellation Room and Hotel 2 Tango. La Cirque is not in my habit trail. I’ve only been there once to play.

The pathways, or “habit trails,” which an anglophone musicmaker in Montreal travels in the city extend as far south as Old Montreal and as far north as the railway lines near Van Horne Ave. in Mile End, go as far west at NDG and as far east as Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Their most visible manifestation is the promotional paper trail they leave up St. Laurent. This is yet another indication of the way in which the dispersed, fragmented and somewhat alienating nature of the city can be pieced together through meaningful and repetitive patterns, subject now to the centripetal pull of the Main. Both new and old scene members suggested that they have made occasional attempts to

promote their shows by going further east than St. Denis, but that it became “easier” and “made more sense” to stick to routine, although there were and are always efforts to broaden a band or artist’s scope:

We tend to play in different venues for different crowds. Different media profiles in different outlets. Posters and advertising put up in "French" areas (read: east end of town) as opposed to "English" areas (west end). However, certainly amongst "English" bands I've known, easily one out of every four or so has a francophone member. Some bands with more than one (maybe not the primary songwriter, or frontperson, but still....). I've played in bands like that myself. I frankly wouldn't know if it's the same for francophone bands, but I'd guess it's pretty rare. Wouldn't venture a guess as to why. Of course, I'm talking about my particular genre of music here (punk-pop-rock-etc.). I know ska and jazz groups where it's half and half. Still, with my bands, we've always made sure to send press packages regarding shows/record releases to French media as well as English. And we bother translating everything beforehand. I remember once being contacted by a French print journalist who asked me why more English bands didn't service French media, and I said “Because they're short-sighted.” On a basic business level, does it really make much sense to ignore such a large part of your potential market?

(Neil)

Most bands play principally to their friends. You know it's so small that you just want to play somewhere where it's easy for your friends to get to. Central is good. Where are they living? If most of my friends near Papineau, which is the case with the francophone scene (that's where we'd play). Most of my friends live in Mile End and the Plateau which is where we play.

There is a geographic division but we've played in the French heartland at La Cirque, which isn't too deep into French territory, but it is French. There is a bunch of other clubs we don't play, but we know about because of French punk bands playing there. When I worked at CKUT, I was way more in touch with the francophone scene. I knew there were clubs that were strange foreign and I had never literally set foot in there, much less play a show there. I get a sense it's another world in some ways. The thing is.... I think what's happened now is there's lots of little clubs, where in the past you had Foufones which was mixed. It was owned by francophones, and the artists who worked there were predominantly francophone, but it was just a big mixing pool

of different languages. And nothing like that exists anymore. I think of Jailhouse as an English place, but I'm sure there are francophones who think of it as a French place.

(Gen)

Neil's pragmatism is contrasted by an aside made by Gen, who noted how difficult it can be to insert a new performance space into established pathways, thinking specifically of the gallery Isart (263 St. Antoine Ouest) which served also as a performance space: "Isart is a mixed space, run by two francophones. But it's outside of understood territory. I mean Old Montreal, that's 'No Man's Land.' That was hard getting people out." Don and Ian suggest another way in which the "weakness" of the scene had actually proven rather fortuitous for the Constellation Room and the Musique Fragile series:

(The Constellation Room) would not exist if the music scene were a lot more vibrant. The room for that kind of event would probably be much less. Simply because of the physicality of where it is. People simply wouldn't make the trek if they weren't seeking out something that was missing on the Main. The mess that is Montreal that we lament is good in a lot of ways, because people can afford to live here on next to nothing and pursue lots of good things.

(Don)

I mean for something like Musique Fragile, it can't help but being something small and marginal. The space determines it, in a sense.

(Ian)

As each of these comments imply, pathways can be both real and/or symbolic: the former are the streets, subways, routes to and from venues, studios and meeting places; the latter include the manner in which certain individuals become musicians (career trajectories), or the role that broadcast, recorded and print media play in disseminating musical knowledges. They also hint at the imaginative dimensions essential to effective music making. As these comments suggest, the shape of pathways is determined and

determines routes and routine. They are, to borrow from Gen, a means by which “habits” are acquired and reinforced. Here are echoes of Bourdieu’s “habitus,” which John Fiske has described as a concept containing “the meaning of habitat, habitant, the processes of habitation and habit, particularly habits of thought” (Fiske, 1992: 155; Bourdieu, 1993). It is a “factor of social difference...within which physical difference and social difference can be related contingently, not metaphorically, and within which social processes can be analyzed in terms of concrete practices intersecting with the structuring forces of a particular social order” (163). Here then, the concept of the habitus and the music-makers’ comments trouble the notion of cognitive maps used by Finnegan. While cognitive mapping as she uses it can suggest ways in which the city can be organized and conceptualized by musicians, it fails to account for the way in which the city can be made to mean what it does, how value comes to accrue to certain people, places, images and things, why it matters in the way that it does, as well as how routes and routines are successfully or unsuccessfully reproduced (more will be said about this in the discussion about mythmaking in the following chapter).

Finnegan suggests that pathways of musical practice involve people in a series of cumulatively overlapping and criss-crossing social relationships. These in turn relate individuals and groups to each other and through personal networks, institutional links, and social ordering of space and time necessarily implicated in each of these pathways to other elements in social life (329). Rick suggests one way in which this can affect musical practice as well as social and spatial relations:

In the early eighties it started to seem more like an English clique... we knew a mostly English crowd... we did a lot of shows at Concordia... in the mid-eighties, with hardcore and everything coming out, the seemed kinda generic to me, getting alot of their

cues from the States.... out of hardcore came bands like Voivod, who were entirely French with a most French audience, but they'd be singing in English. It's funny coz they were all so clearly French and part of a French scene. I can't understand why they weren't singing in French. Probably because they wanted mass appeal outside of Montreal, but the French crowd was still rooting for them. And I kept thinking: "We're singing in English. How come they don't come and see us too? Why weren't they rooting for us? Or why didn't they root for us?"

The shift that Rick pinpoints as the appearance of an "English clique" has as much to do with the stratification of the genres emerging out of punk and independent music as it does with the concomitant institutionalization and professionalization of the networks for the distribution of music to the anglophone music world. It is much broader but similar to the process of industrialization, institutionalization and the embracing of musical pluralism which was occurring at the same time in francophone Quebec.

How these broad-based shifts in cultural production, consumption and social relations are registered spatially says a great deal about the response among anglophone musicians in the city. The editors of The Place of Music (Leyshon *et al*, 1998), an anthology of essays which merges popular music studies and cultural geography, remind us that "space produces as space is produced" (4). They continue: "To consider the place of music is not to reduce music to its location, to ground it down into some geographical baseline, but to allow a purchase on the rich aesthetic, cultural, economic, and political geographies of musical language" (ibid). Rick hints at the sociomusical shifts which occurred as "hardcore" made its appearance in Montreal, and how new divisions seemed to appear with the incorporation of a new "foreign" musical idiom into established practices. The success of this idiom was in part connected with the reassertion of aesthetic heritages (progressive and art rock in this case), musical practices which were

seen to be embedded in specific long-standing Quebecois musical communities and their traditions (Grenier, 1995, 1996). In the minds of some interviewees, this process of maturation excluded anglophone musicians:

We're (the American Devices) ghettoized and there's no interest in us at all. It's funny because apparently there's this huge industry here and I have no clue how to get in. I've been living here my whole life and there's no way for me to tap into. I'd bet if we changed our all our lyrics into French nothing would happen.

(Rick)

It is here, it should be noted, that the language of exclusion and inclusion (“US” versus “THEM” as Eleni put it above) has been a central component of the sociopolitical language through which Quebec as a sovereign state or integral part of Canada is symbolically and discursively constructed, by those living in the province as well as outside it. There is a perception, as Rick indicated, that anglophones in Montreal are a ghettoized culture living within a larger ghettoized culture, which is often construed as a double-marginalization (or as Patti suggests, Montreal “is like Canada reduced”). For the most part, many of those musicmakers interviewed expressed no explicit interest in the politics of language rights or provincial sovereignty. As Neil claimed, when asked about the current state of musical affairs and the language issues so intimately connected to daily life in Montreal,

(p)ersonally, it's less a factor now than it's ever been. Perhaps being more bilingual than before helps, but opening your mouth doesn't seem like a political act anymore (thank God!). Definitely not like the mid-90s, when the stress of the pre- and post-Referendum era caused most everyone I knew to drink and drug more than they had been. We've all grown up quite a lot. Only the die-hards still fight those battles, still swing at those windmills....

(Neil)

It would be too reductive to see in contemporary Montreal an anemic anglophone music culture struggling rather vainly to make its presence known amidst a vital and robust francophone musical community. Rather than positioning anglophone musicmakers within the allegedly “oppressed” English community in Montreal, a more accurate portrait would depict the tenacity of its practitioners as one fraught by everyday tensions which have much more to do with “getting by.” The result of the scene’s “social persistence” (Blum) has been the creation of a musical culture that has responded to changes occurring at the level of politics and the economy with, at various times and to varying degrees, indifference and innovation.

In this respect, Montreal has been, and is, a place marked by uneven flow and mobility, where boundaries are continually redefined and new geographies of exclusion and inclusion are continually dissolved and reconstituted. But as these interviews show, the way in which that turbulence is perceived and managed by musicmakers, through varied responses, has led to the elaboration of spatial and social relations which have proven in many ways, and for different reasons at different times, to be quite resilient. Different types of interaction between anglophone and francophone cultures at various moments over the last twenty years have produced different spaces, moving from Old Montreal to Mile End, which are themselves contingent upon economic factors and spatial practices as well as the emergence and maturation of different aesthetic and generic categories. The object here has not been to trace out causal determinations; rather, it was to sketch out a provisional outline which can lead into a deeper analysis of the symbolic and affective dimensions of musicmaking in Montreal. It is not a totalizing examination by any means. Instead, it is an attempt to document the degree to which

social life and cultural expression are influenced, determined by, as well as contingent upon, other dimensions of city life, be they political, economic or linguistic. The way in which this has shaped and helps shape a particular image of Montreal will be taken up in the following chapter.

NOTES

¹ For more on this change in English Canada see Straw, 1994.

² There is ample evidence of this institutionally and industrially supported pluralism in the city's many international musical festivals such as the Francopholies, the International Jazz Fest, Nuit d'Afriques.

³ Much of this history is described in more detail on the Berliner Museum's website: <<http://osiris.teccart.qc.ca/berliner/enaccueilfr.htm>>

⁴ A significant player in the city's cross-border illegal rum-running operations, the Bronfman family, would by the end of the twentieth century, be running a different and more "legitimate" business: Vivendi-Universal.

⁵ Cited in Radice, 2000: 127

⁶ Juan Rodriguez, "Rock & Pop: Want to boogie? You're in the right place," *The Montreal Gazette*, May 21, 1977, pg. 39.

⁷ Dave Bist, "Discotheques -- we're number one: Something for everyone from freaks to old folks," *The Montreal Gazette*, June 6, 1970. My thanks to Will Straw for supplying both of these references.

⁸ "Disco: Integral Part Of Canada's Nightlife" *Billboard*, October 29, 1977 C27.

⁹ CRSG was denied an FM license by the CRTC in 1987. McGill's application, submitted at the same time, was accepted.

¹⁰ Cited in Deminchinsky and Kalman Naves, 2000: 168

¹¹ The growing strength of the scene has, since 1995, been acknowledged annually by the Montreal Independent Music Industry festival (the MiMis). Founded in part by Dan Webster, late of Psyche Industries, booking at Foufones, now at Greenland Productions, one of the city's major promoters of independent rock shows, and affiliated with DKD Productions.

¹² 1996 Census: Education, Mobility and Migration, StatsCan, 1997.

¹³ See Kelly, 1985.

¹⁴ SODEC: La Société de Développement des Entreprises Culturelles, a provincial funding body which supports Quebec (francophone) artists. Musicaction: a province-focused funding group, with monies coming from the Canadian government and private radio sources (Cogéco Radio-Télévision, Corus, Astral and Standard Radio)

¹⁵ See also Sarah Thornton, 1996

¹⁶ See also Sara Cohen, 1998 : 276.

Chapter Five:

“Let Us Compare Mythologies”

Discussions among musicmakers about the contemporary music scene in Montreal are notable for their emphasis on the figure of the city itself. Many musicmakers perceive the city’s potential for musical production to be compromised by a litany of problems: language, economics, politics, lack of infrastructure, audience support, etc. Others see in the city itself an opportunity to make music according to their own rules, unencumbered by the threats the presence of the dominant recording industry might otherwise pose to artistic freedom and creative labour. There is in all of this hardly any consensus as to the amorphous nature of musicmaking in Montreal. Regardless of whether or not one has either professional aspirations, intends to remain a career amateur, or sees this simply as a hobby or “phase,” the city is perceived in a number of ways which can hardly be reduced to a single agreed-upon image. What is notable is that the majority of musicmakers share a commitment to Montreal, and orient their activity in such a way that they can take advantage of the diverse, if somewhat diminished, resources available. Montreal takes on a significant (in both a semiotic and sociological sense) role in musicmaking, serving as a foil for some, a rich site of possibility for others. In this respect, how the city figures into musicmaking, or more appropriately, its figural aspects, form the central focus here, as it suggests how one particular image, that of an anglo-bohemia, influences the nature of musicmaking in Montreal. The experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks are useful categories here, as they can bring into focus anglo-bohemia in Montreal, noting as well how it finds spatial expression through musicmaking. The manner in which the singularity of the city’s cultural life is articulated

within musical practice, that is, how a specific communal ambience is communicated through material, experiential and symbolic forms, is best understood in relation to these frameworks.

The repository of bohemian images associated with Montreal cultural life is deep and well-mined, by musicmakers and others alike. At various points during the twentieth century, Montreal has been portrayed as a city whose libidinal sociality wins out over those other tarnished aspects (i.e. the downturn in the economy). In the thirties and forties, for example, the combination of an expanding immigrant class, a black working class, an increasingly higher standard of living, a burgeoning middle class, a social milieu marked by language tensions, alongside an emerging musical culture gave the city an air of cultural vitality, evident in its thriving jazz scenes, literary and art worlds. One of the more significant cultural moments in Quebec would come in the late forties, precipitated by the firing of the painter Paul-Émile Borduas from L'École du meubles in 1948. *Les Automatistes* at the time were fomenting a new modern art movement, one which would culminate in the manifesto *Refus global* in 1948, an artist-driven tract which anticipated the province's "quiet revolution" and signaled a call to secularize and modernize Quebec society (Ellenwood, 1992). This group was committed to a staunch refusal of the aesthetic and social strictures of the time, which they saw as stultifying Quebec culture generally:

We must break with the conventions of society once and for all, and reject its utilitarian spirit. We must refuse to function knowingly at less than our physical and mental potential; refuse to close our eyes to vice and fraud perpetrated in the name of knowledge or favours or due respect. We refuse to be confined to the barracks of the plastic arts—it's a fortress, but easy enough to avoid. We refuse to keep silent. Do what you want with us, but you must hear us out. We will not accept your fame or attendant

honours. They are the stigmata of shame, silliness and servility. We refuse to serve, or to be used for such purposes. We reject all forms of INTENTION, the two-edged sword of REASON.

Down with both of them, back they go! MAKE WAY FOR MAGIC! MAKE WAY FOR OBJECTIVE MYSTERIES! MAKE WAY FOR LOVE! MAKE WAY FOR NECESSITIES!

(excerpt from *Refus global*, cited in Ellenwood, 136)

The sentiments in *Refus global* would resonate for years to come, spurring debate about the social role of the artist and art in society in many of the province's newspapers. It would set the tone also for a Montreal avant-garde tradition which would extend to the present day musicmakers such as Godspeed, Mitchell Akiyama and others (see below).

The city's anglophone literary scene would contribute substantially to Montreal mythmaking over the course of the twentieth century, with Morley Callaghan fictionalizing the heyday of Rockhead's Paradise (which he called "Café St. Antoine") in his novel, The Loved and the Lost (1970):

Music came from the ground-floor open window, the music of a cello and a piano, and he could see three figures, one a Negro at a piano, another, who looked like a French Canadian, at the cello, and the third figure, the face hidden, was bending over the piano. The piano and cello achieved an hypnotic effect in primitive counterpoint, repeating a simple theme over and over with curious discords;... the musicians were held in their strange rapture, and there was nothing in the world for them but the lonely little theme and that one room in the cold night and their own intensity. The shunting of engines in the station yard and the hum of the city and the gray shabby neighbourhood could never break the magic of their private, peculiar, and isolated rapture.

(Callaghan)¹

Bryan Demchinsky and Elaine Kalman Naves have recently considered the stories which shaped Montreal's literary imagination for the better part of three centuries. They catalogue many of the literary representations of Montreal in poetry and literature, noting

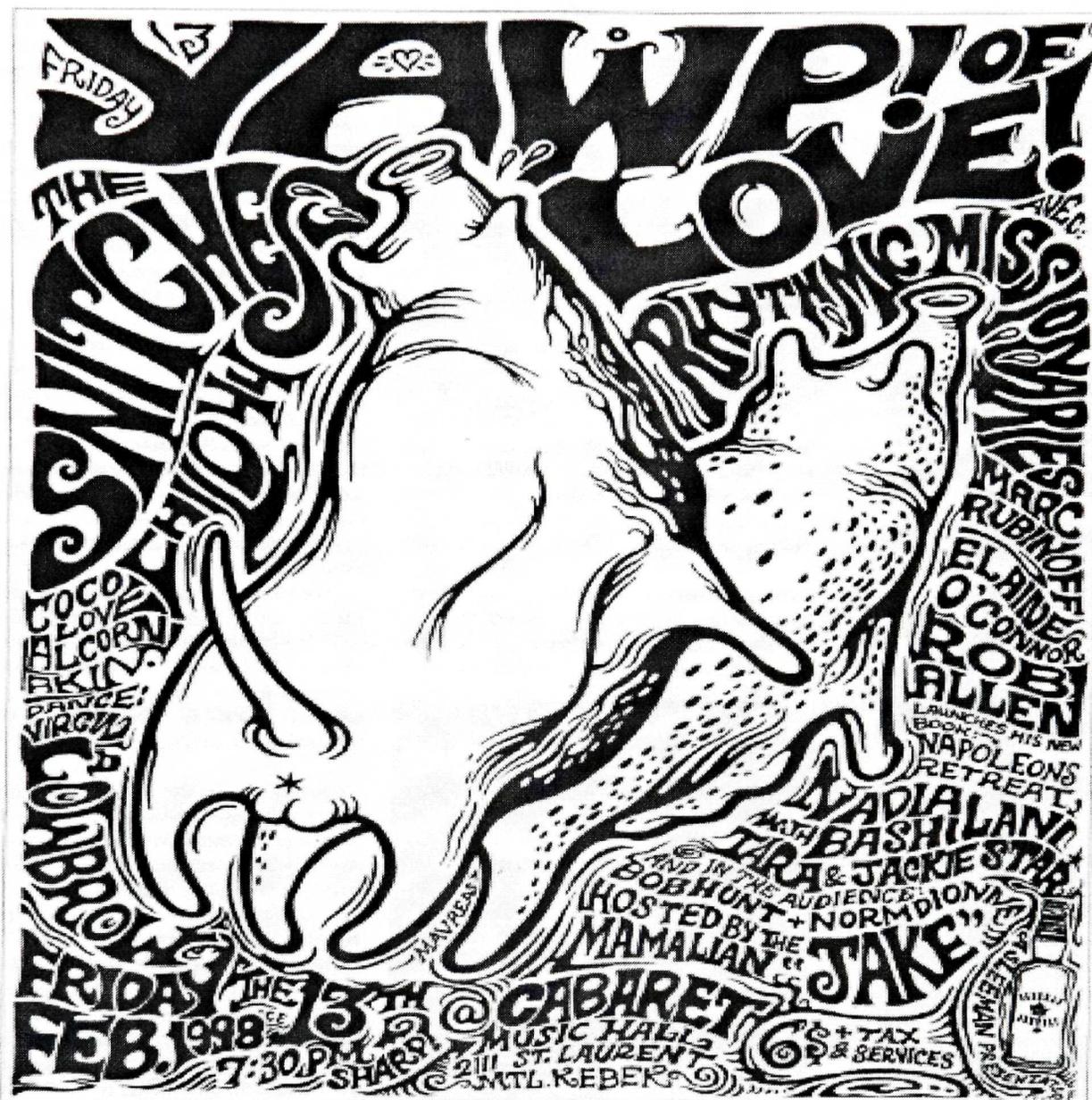
that a “great city is built twice: once of wood, brick, and stone and once as an act of imagination” (ibid: 9).² Notably, their choices were culled from canonically high-brow literature, ignoring the work of muckraking journalists such as Al Palmer, whose Montreal Confidential (1950) and the fictional Sugarpuss on Dorchester Street (1949) both documented the city’s sleazier underside. Palmer called Montreal “the gaudy, bawdy settlement on the St. Lawrence. It is not so much a city as a state of mind” (Palmer, 1950: 123). Any and all representations of Montreal are contributions to the semiotic textures of the city. James Donald reminds us of the importance of textualization to the city:

The relation between novel and city, then, is not merely one of representation. The text is actively constitutive of the city. Writing does not only record or reflect the fact of the city. It has its role in producing the city for a reading public.

(Donald, 1997:187)

The very act of textualization, whether of in the form of a novel or not, must take place somewhere, and the creative tenor of a city can be gauged not solely by the volume of texts about itself, but by those texts-as-indices which point to a city’s potential for cultural production.³ The examples here can be found in the burgeoning anglophone poetry scene in the 1940s, made up of locals and ex-pats alike, would also make itself known at a national and international level, with the likes of Louis Dudek, A.M. Klein, P.K. Page and Irving Layton, producing poetry which would mark one of Canada’s more profound modernist breaks (Trehearne, 1999).⁴ The social worlds associated with Montreal poetry would remain vibrant throughout the fifties and sixties (with Leonard Cohen its mythical avatar). It would lie somewhat neglected by the literary world and its audience for much the seventies and eighties, only to be revived by a group of committed

artists who would reenergize the scene through spoken word. This latter group brings us up to present-day Montreal in its “ragged glory,” evidenced here in this announcement for Yawp! (as in Whitman’s “I sound my barbaric yawp over the rooftops of the world”),⁵ a spoken word series:



(Yawp Handbill, Feb. 1998, from *Impure*, 2001)

Many of these poets would celebrate the city as a cultural space ripe with promise, resting many of these assertions on the claim that a dire economic climate and

the “limits” of being an anglophone are precisely the aesthetic prompts art needs to flourish:

I think there’s advantages to being English in Quebec... in that it is a much tighter scene. I think Montreal is in the margins in Canada anyway, in a certain way. We’re a big city bisected or divided because of French and English, in terms of activity. Although they sometimes come together, it splits the scene and makes each one smaller. On the other hand I think smallness makes it bigger in certain other ways. It makes it work differently, there’s just a different kind of dynamism here.

(Simon Dardick)⁶

I think Montreal is unlike any other city in Canada because the cost of living is low enough so that you can live and do your art. Work in your art. And not die. As opposed to Toronto or Vancouver or anywhere else. In Toronto there’s the survival thing that goes on where you work to survive, to pay the rent. But it’s half the cost to live here, and we still have as much fun. It’s a neat little place for artists, because it’s cosmopolitan enough and vibrant enough and cheap enough.

(Karen Stewart)⁷

Poetry is a minor culture, really. You don’t think of people who are into literature or poetry as the ruling class of society. They are the downwardly mobile element. They start out maybe in the middle class and they go down to working at whatever job they can, or no job, so they can just struggle with their art and their craft. A lot of people come to Montreal to live this life. This is the bohemian sink.

(Jeremiah Wall)⁸

Independent music, like poetry, is a minor culture, a micromusic as Slobin suggests, and its early practitioners also found in Montreal something deeply provocative about the city’s decline:

Montreal is welcoming to artists because it’s very cheap to live here, you can get a lot done, and it’s close to central Ontario—a place where you can make a lot of money—without having to pay the exorbitant rent to live there. Montreal has always had a weird scene for live music, and it has to do with the winter and the isolation. You’re allowed to develop on your own, you play your own brand of weirdness and because there’s not a lot of clubs that

you could play at, there was no homogenous sound like what was coming out of Toronto at that time.

(Tony Dewald, *Deja Voodoo*)⁹

It was wide-open city. It was just after the PQ came into power, and it was a very socialist state. Apartments were near squatter's rates; you could rent a place for \$100-\$200 a month. At the time it was as liberated as any culture that existed, and probably still does, in Canada. There wasn't a lot going on in terms of an organized music scene, but the chaos and the unbridled-ness was very attractive. Everything was accepted. It was a punk utopia.

(Dan Webster)¹⁰

These comments, or reminisces to be more precise, fit quite neatly into the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks. Politics, economics and social life in Montreal are singled out here as fundamental determinations which impinge upon the city's cultural life. Spatialization, in Shields' sense, is in evidence, too, through mythmaking and the maintenance of specific place-images. The city serves as a figure and ground, and in this dual capacity Montreal provides a vital social function as a place which, even in its downtrodden state, tolerates and encourages creativity for many anglophones. Alasdair Gray, in his novel Lanark, claimed that "if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively" (cited in McArthur, 1997: 34). An initial reading of this claim might lead one to believe he means the city as simply the subject of art. But it resonates on another plane too, and can be expanded to include the act of artistic production. In the case of Montreal, its vast symbolic and material resources are utilized in a range of musical activities that add to the cumulative textures and palpable ambience of the city. This is not to suggest that the image of Montreal as "punk utopia" was an uncontested perception; instead, embedded in this image are a variety of tensions, cultural partitions and social demarcations. David Harvey prompts us to consider that "(s)patial representations are both product and producer" (Moore, city in

Harvey, 216). Thus, the primary issues to take into account are how these tensions are articulated within the city's anglophone scene, how a particular image of the city, namely its "bohemian-ness," can be seen to contain divergent points of view, and finally, how this image plays itself out in terms of structuring the social relations found in the act of musicmaking.

Anglophone Musicmaking in Montreal

Montreal remains a true haven for humans not entirely thrilled with "the system." The city is awash in cheap atmospheric real estate, delicious food, and tolerant vibes. Added bonus: most of the English people there are kind of nuts. My aunt who lives in Montreal says, "When the English fled the city, only the kooks remained behind." This is true. If not outright mad, Montreal Anglophones decidedly lean towards eccentricity: capes, monocles, jodhpurs, and (thanks to a wacky political situation) a rich abundance of conspiracy theories. Talk about bait for the disenfranchised!

(Douglas Coupland)¹¹

The usual story about anglo Montreal is that most of it has moved away. Then there are tales of plucky diehards who hold tight to their bagels and hope for better times. These 3-o'clock coffee swillers are something different: a community with an ethos and a lifestyle symbiotically linked with the decline of the city.

(*Globe and Mail*)¹²

For myself I always feel like we're drawing on an idealized version of Montreal. When I first moved here that quickly bottomed out. We're not so self-involved to think that we made this out of scratch. (However) I feel like there is something new going on with the fact that more people are staying in this city who aren't from this city. There's more of a dropout culture that has manifested itself because things are so shitty everywhere else. Like why would you move to Toronto anyway?

(Efrim)

Toronto has all the money and none of the style; Montreal has no money and all the style.

(Montreal saying)

Over the course of the last century Montreal has occupied a number of symbolic roles within the Canadian social imaginary. A salient example can be found mid-century, as noted earlier, where it figured as a vibrant cosmopolitan city, one where the worlds of sex, sin and leisure met up with the literary, music, film and art scenes to produce, in many estimations, a North American version of *la vie bohème*. If it were possible to map the nation's moral geography at the time, the result for many would have confirmed an image of Montreal as Canada's Sin City. This mapping has been done, albeit in a way which romanticizes rather than disparages this particular moment. The corrupt yet compelling worlds of the thirties, forties and early fifties in Montreal have been more than adequately eulogized and mythologized in a number of books and films dedicated to showcasing the city's once seedy glamour.¹³ For a segment of the anglophone literary and journalistic elite, it's an era that retains its evocative power because it is understood as the point at which Montreal had reached its cosmopolitan apotheosis, a process of modernization which they saw as impossible to disentangle from the seemingly positive influences of the city's longstanding anglo-hegemony. For a number of them, this brief period of Montreal urban history represents a pre-lapsarian moment prior to the assertion of francophone rights and claims articulated during the "quiet revolution." According to many of the anglophone writers reflecting on the city's past, this period helped to position Montreal, within a national urban hierarchy at least, as the liberal, urbane, and quintessentially "happening" modern Canadian metropolis (an historical moment which preceded its supposed "demetropolization").¹⁴

While there remains a residual sense of its lurid past today, a contemporary map of Montreal's social and cultural worlds would most certainly cast the city in a different light. Nowadays, the city is more likely to be conjured up as a complex milieu marked by a starker contrast: on the one hand, it is the epitome of the fallen and ruined city, a once robust financial and transportation centre whose glory days have long since waned; on the other, it is a city whose diminished economic status has fostered among local and non-local artists (and others) an image of a still vital cultural centre. These are not incommensurate images of the city. In fact, they inform two complementary narratives: one of economic decline and weakness marked indelibly by language tensions and sovereignty debates and the other a narrative of resilience as expressed through the mythical character of its enduring cultural life. The introductory comments are affirmations of both these narratives, highlighting the city's paradoxical nature. They also suggest how certain developments are perceived as crucial to the emergence of an increasingly aestheticized urban experience. Thus, while alluding to the city's troubled urban milieu, they also affirm a celebratory image of the city framed in terms of its active social and cultural life.

This tension underscores many visions of the city, but reveals itself quite tellingly in the notion of Montreal as the ideal site for an anglo-bohemia to flourish, an evocative image that forms a part of the discursive envelope containing specific cultural and social dimensions of city life. Each comment in its own way directly and indirectly refers to the way in which economic and political forces form the backdrop against which the city-as-sign—Montreal as bohemia—is placed in relief. In sharing certain rhetorical tropes, these comments enunciate Montreal's sociocultural specificity and indicate that the city

still resonates with a mythic aura. Taken together, one can discern in these comments a common strategy of meaning-making, one that situates Montreal as a positively-charged city-as-sign rendered in such a way that it remains a privileged locale for social and aesthetic activity. As a semiotic gloss on the city's status as Canada's cultural hub, the epigraphs by Coupland, et al, form part of a set of signifying practices which define its cultural and social spheres, helping to transform Montreal's city-as-sign into a city-as-scene, fostering and maintaining an idealized vision of culturally-centred urban life to which artists and those not happy with "the system" continue to gravitate.

While Coupland's allusion to jodhpurs, monocles and capes are today somewhat dated (and perhaps even more so, embarrassing) emblems of its eccentricity, Montreal's bohemian world remains dense with the requisite signifiers that single it out, both socially and spatially, as a subcultural hub. It gains its sociological and semiotic shape by virtue of its disparate and diverse population: dissenting members of the middle-class, disgruntled intellectuals, disenchanting adolescents seeking to shuffle off a suburban malaise, the many disaffected students, drifters and "starving" artists. Its spatial coordinates are made-up by the sites these groups share, gathering in informal settings which allow and encourage forms of individual and collective expression (i.e. cafés, bars, lofts and abandoned warehouses).¹⁵ Cultural rebels, "plucky diehards," artists, and café habitués populate a shadow cultural economy, one that feeds a world established and cultivated through an underground ideology. It is an ideology effectively articulated through aesthetic and social codes and embodied in the behaviours, attitudes and signifying practices which define a bohemian lifestyle, expressive practices which contribute to the materiality of the city and lend it its ambient qualities. Formed through

specific symbolic and material practices, all oriented in such a way that they privilege the virtues of cultural productivity and creative labour over economic or commercial success, Montreal's anglo-bohemia can thus be defined by its members as a social space with its own moral economy, a world relatively independent from what they perceive to be the "mainstream" or dominant culture, one intimately linked with their understanding and experience of Montreal.

"Fragile urban habitats of busy streets," says Russell Jacoby, "cheap eateries, reasonable rents, and decent environs foster bohemia" (Jacoby, 1987: 28). The social dimensions of Montreal's bohemian demimonde are molded by the city's notoriously cheap rents, a chronically depressed economy marked by high rates of un- and under-employment amongst educated members of the middle-class who've chosen to "drop-out," the promise of low-cost but by no means less-refined leisure, the open-minded Euro-civility, what novelist/essayist Hugh MacLennan has called its "cynical urbanity," (cited in Weintraub, 1996: 219).¹⁶ With echoes of Maffesoli's notion of "conflictual harmony," (Maffesoli, 1996: 31) it's a world that asserts its singularity through the combination of anglophone, francophone and allophone cultures frequently mingling with an animated restlessness in a charged political atmosphere, one which permeates all aspects of everyday life (produced mainly through sovereignty and language debates and in the case of English Montreal embodied in the figures of the suffering "anxious anglophone" and more recently the liberated 'new anglo')¹⁷

Describing the animated social character of cities—enumerating their various scenes and communities in terms recalling Louis Wirth's notion of them as a mosaic of social worlds (Wirth, 1938: 19)—requires that we see the urban musical world as just one

world among the city's many worlds. There are film, art and theatre worlds as well, and these disparate spheres act, react and interact to produce the image of a culturally and socially vibrant metropolis. The music scene forms one such creative milieu, one whose organizing and unifying principles are based on a logic of differentiation (from the mainstream/straight society). Musicmakers work to establish their own cultural and moral economy, in order to signal the scene's distinctiveness as well as their disdain for the straight world. If a scene's members work to map out a different social, cultural, and discursive space for themselves in the city, at the same time the scene's relation to the city itself can also be theorized in a more complex fashion. Following from Blum's (2001) work on a scene's particular social relation to the city, we can offer a more nuanced illustration of the relationship between city and scene. A scene can be, and often is, construed as an index of urban and cultural vitality and a sign of the quality of social life; a scene signifies the quality of a city's "cityness." And while we can read a scene in an indexical fashion—as a positively-charged sign referring to a city's fecundity and ability to accommodate diversity and difference, a social form that both carries the traces and points towards the social relations of its larger urban setting—it can also be read in less celebratory terms as its sociocultural practices come to be inflected by the numerous tensions which directly and indirectly structure city life.

Montreal's independent anglophone music scene exemplifies this relationship. As a creative milieu which contributes to Montreal's "bohemian-ness," the anglophone music scene is fraught by a number of tensions. The way in which cultural and social activity coalesces and coheres (or doesn't) is taken as an indicator of the peculiar sociality of Montreal. The types and degrees of this sociality can be situated in relation

to a variety of issues affecting life in Montreal. We have considered already the relationship between language issues, as well as economic and political tensions and their bearing on cultural production. These can in turn be framed in relation to institutional, industrial and social networks which bind activities and people together. These tensions are often resolved, negotiated, transformed or, in some cases, reconstituted, within the context of a particular socioaesthetic, and more specifically, sociomusical experience of the city, an experience that produces and reproduces certain images, discourses and rhetorics which determine how the city is inhabited and imagined by musicmakers. Within this sociomusical experience, the singularity of Montreal's anglophone independent music scene gains its appeal.

The discursive function of "independent" is important to note here.

"Independent" in the context of musicmaking means both a mode of musical production separate from the mainstream recording industry as well as a combined set of social and aesthetic practices.¹⁸ Bourdieu (1996) makes this point more concisely in his discussion of bohemia and its emergence in relation to a literary field. A bohemia, he reminds us, as a "society of artists is not merely a laboratory where this singular art of living that is the style of an artist's life is being invented as a fundamental dimension of the enterprise of artistic creation. One of its major functions...is to be its own market" (58). How that autonomy is perceived or maintained by the actors in a market for cultural goods depends on the ability, need, or willingness to disavow certain aspects and demands of that overarching "other" market, the money economy. He terms the former market an "economic world reversed," one where financial success is a sign of failure. Here, instead of economic capital, cultural and symbolic capital (competence/knowledge and

prestige/status/reputation respectively) are the measures of success, the somewhat artful acquisition and display of which maintains privileged positions within field. If we take independent music as an example of a field of cultural production which functions according to a certain logic, visible links with mainstream benefactors, large scale institutions, or, more importantly, the appearance that one may be operating according to the rational calculations of the mainstream recording industry, require for their disavowal a certain amount of skill, the ability to translate symbolic or cultural capital in such a way so as to consolidate a privileged position or vantage point within the cultural field, showing at the same time adequate distance from (and disdain for) the economic field. A field of cultural production such as independent music often functions according to a surveillance regime always on the lookout for potential contradictions and compromises. Within the moral economies of independent music, with its rarefied aesthetic politics founded on an even more arcane economy and language of “cool,” there is little tolerance for those who apparently “sell out.” As the case of derivative records indicates, however, for certain anglophone musicmakers in Montreal the reliance on those mainstream institutions and industries is seen mainly as a necessity, an alliance that must be understood in terms of survival and also, however muted, short-lived, circumscribed, ironized or inverted, some concept of success.

The twin notions of suffering and success and the role they play in shaping a particular urban experience are taken up throughout this discussion. The interviews done with musicmakers provide the opportunity to explore the relationship between the image of Montreal as an anglo-bohemia and the means by which musicmakers *work through* a complex set of social and cultural practices to negotiate or reaffirm certain social

divisions and cultural distinctions. The comments cited here are particularly germane, coming as they do from people who are not from Montreal; originally from other Canadian cities, they moved here to study and stayed to make music.¹⁹ Their perceptions and experiences of Montreal typify how a singular representation, and, more specifically, how the maintenance of that image, can contain so many tensions. Their comments suggest that the image and social character of the city are often indistinguishable, a conflation that continually works itself out at the level of cultural production within the anglo music scene. They also reveal the way in which the longstanding trope of Montreal as a city where the “two solitudes” meet continues to be positioned in relation to an image of the city as the ideal location for an anglo-bohemia to take hold. It is, as will be shown, a complex relationship which allows the notion of suffering to be routinely ironized and valorized, thus illustrating how both these representations are mobilized to work off, and against, one another, deepening as well as complicating the sociomusical experience in Montreal.

Underscoring the sometimes frustrating and frustrated dimensions of cultural production in Montreal is the rhetoric of weakness and suffering that remains attached to many aspects of musicmaking in the city. Musicmakers often point to the diminished resources and lack of support (from audiences, other labels, other musicians, promoters, local radio, government granting agencies, etc.) as primary factors affecting musical practice in Montreal. For those who choose to stay, this choice often necessitates the use of certain heroic narratives, survival myths evincing what Bourdieu has called “the prestige of romantic triumph” (Bourdieu, 1996:55) (and we should be mindful here of a complementary narrative trope indigenous to bohemia: the narrative of dissipation—see

Siegel, 1988 and Wilson, 2000). Among independent musicmakers, these conceits are often ironized in the form of a heroic anti-heroism, a self-conscious posture of disdain and disavowal struck in relation to other people and places that appear to offer more visible (“easier”) points of entry into the mainstream recording industry (i.e., Toronto). More generally, these attitudes are part of the symbolic, imaginative and creative labour used to make sense of the city in distinctly sociomusical terms. They also help to articulate a sense of belonging for members of the scene, mapping out a highly charged social milieu marked as much by its inclusivity as by its exclusivity.

On a broader scale, the codes of being and belonging are evident in the individual dispositions, social positions and rhetorical postures which contribute to, and must be understood in relation to, a sense that things in Montreal are done with seeming ease, but never appear to come easy, where what was originally a choice (a form of middle-class escapism raised to an “art of living”) takes on the nobler character of necessity, and, notably, where a willful marginality (and perception of isolation) takes on a different resonance in a city that once played a central role in a national and international economy but has itself now been pushed to the periphery. (Thus, following from Coupland, one is lead to ask how easily Montreal’s supposed eccentricity can be correlated to its ex-centricity).²⁰ As a result, the perception that Montreal’s cultural life functions according to an ingrained anomie and produces an acceptable ambience of idleness/inertia is taken as a commonplace by the scene’s members. As Gen put it:

In Toronto people want to succeed. People here accept that they won’t. It’s a choice. You probably feel slightly depressed. You won’t get alot of money or the big record contract. People are living a more accepted, more realistic existence here. It’s low key. It’s that kind of humble low-keyness here. Here it’s a lifestyle.

Comments like this can be paired with the notion of *working through* to indicate that the valorization of certain kinds of labour—symbolic, imaginative and cultural/creative—is deeply rooted in the networks, social hierarchies and systems of exchange and evaluation specific to bohemia. This sense of *working through* is meant to suggest one way in which Montreal musicmakers make meaningful, and occasionally resolve, the otherwise fraught relationships between the anglocentric transregional aspects of independent music production and distribution and the local circumstances that keep them, literally and figuratively, grounded. It is a term that also helps to frame an examination of the interdependent nature of the anglo-centric industries, institutions and social networks which provide the lines of continuity underpinning certain musical practices. The result is a phenomenon which can reveal how mediated and mutually reinforcing, and thus how complex, social relations and cultural practices often are in Montreal.

Setting the Scene

Montreal appeals to me because it's isolated already. I like lower-expectation complex, so it's kind of like Canada reduced even more. So if you can hang on to an aesthetic sensibility against the odds it makes you even stronger. That's a really backwards and noble way to think about it, but it appeals to me on a really "primal" level.

(Patti)

You do feel like an exile living in this city. I feel isolated from whatever the motor of the economy is. I feel completely removed from it and everyone I know feels completely removed from it. And that's a healthy thing for me.... I left Toronto because everyone I knew was getting jobs in the film industry and that doesn't happen here. That's good, I'm happy about that. I walk around the street here and I don't feel connected at all.

(Efrim)

The presence of scenes, despite their mortality, means that the city continuously breeds the collective desire to represent shared intimacy in ways that are situated as special, particular and exclusive.

(Alan Blum)²¹

Suffering builds a scene's character. Not the most delicate way to frame a discussion of musical scenes but an assessment not entirely misplaced if one wants to consider the conflicting and competing ideas and agendas of all those musicmakers (musicians, promoters, record label owners, etc.) organizing and managing their cultural practices according to their diverse needs and often divergent interests. In Montreal, the social and spatial consequences of these notions of suffering and tenacity are evident throughout the anglophone independent music scene. This sense of weakness can be positioned *vis à vis* the larger political and socioeconomic situation of Quebec and the discursive construction of the Montreal anglo (as something distinct from the Toronto anglo) which structure both the real and imagined space of the province's largest city. In both instances, they can be seen as local manifestations and articulations of larger social and political forces.²² Outlining the ways in which certain images are marshalled together to position Montreal within a national urban hierarchy illustrates how this particular representation of urban social and cultural space is fostered mainly through anglocentric social networks, industries and institutions, how this transforms or reproduces social and spatial divisions, and how it helps to articulate a distinct sense of belonging.

Consider the social character of Montreal's current anglo music scene: with its actors eschewing the mainstream or straight world, this social world, has, at one level, the

character of what Erving Goffman (1961) has called a “focused gathering.” Clifford

Geertz has summed this up neatly as

a set of persons engrossed in a common flow of activity and relating to one another in terms of that flow. Such gatherings meet and disperse; the participants in them fluctuate; the activity that focuses them is discrete--a particulate process that reoccurs rather than one that endures.

(Geertz, 1991: 249)

Rather than the cohesion afforded by longstanding organized social groups, focused gatherings are marked by their temporary, loose-knit, casual and *ad hoc* character.

Focused gatherings amongst musicmakers in Montreal acquire their social character primarily through the vast number of informal meeting places which always threaten to disappear, lending the city’s anglo music scene a sense of fluidity and looseness, an atmosphere founded on a perception of instability confirmed at a material level through a migratory anglophone population whose numbers are always fluctuating. In both instances, what is maintained among anglophone musicmakers is an indelible image of urban fragility and flux that allows them to rhetorically position Montreal as the ideal setting for a bohemia to assert itself. In these situations, this variegated world creates a social energy which contributes to a more general communal ambience, proclaiming Montreal’s ability to accommodate the individual and collective desires of musicmakers.

On another level, and as a counterpoint, Montreal also acts as a staging ground for an artistic underworld where social gatherings are guaranteed their recurrence through individuals’ links with social and cultural institutions and their involvement with key industrial sites. Once again noting the indexical relation between city and scene, cultural practices at the micro-level of the scene become intentional and unintentional indicators of the political and economic situation affecting social and cultural life in the city as a

whole. We can consider the significance of these urban dramas by citing two examples of institutions and industries and the role they play in securing for many anglophones a place in Montreal's music scene: anglo-dominated institutions such as McGill and Concordia and the locally-based, predominantly anglophone, international record distributor (one-stop) Cargo Canada.

For many anglophones, universities are primary points of entry into the city's numerous artistic scenes. They provide one line of continuity which can be traced back to a well-established tradition of generating and regenerating the intellectual and cultural fields required to draw out the future cultural and subcultural elites, cultural rebels, artists and creative denizens who continually replenish the city's underworld. Here a field is a "structured space with its own laws of functioning and its own relations of force independent of those of politics and the economy" (Johnson, in Bourdieu 1993: 6).

Fields, as defined earlier, function according to a logic of exchange related to various types of capital (intellectual capital in an intellectual field, cultural capital in a cultural field, etc.). For anglophone students, McGill University or Concordia University (where the language of instruction is English) serve as social and institutional settings structured by the intersection of intellectual and cultural fields. While here, students are introduced to a number of interlocking social networks and cultural institutions that function mainly in English.²³ These institutions and their ancillary networks provide a broader context for cultural activity which is insulated from the larger economic and political forces at work in the city. To take an example: through the university, the musically-inclined can find their way to campus-based community radio, a pluralistic social space which acts as a transitional zone bringing together a university community and the larger urban

community. Community radio is a place where students, activists, and artists/musicians not affiliated with the university gather and where diversity and difference are positively charged, its heterogeneity marking its distinction from the mainstream or dominant culture. It also serves to bring together older musicmakers who have moved out of active participation in the scene to newer members (Louise, Gen, Patti, Ian, Don, for instance, all worked at CKUT Radio McGill). In this capacity, community radio allows individuals so inclined to be slowly ingratiated into a broader social and cultural space which extends beyond the campus. From here, aspiring musicmakers can find themselves immersed in city-wide industrial and institutional networks which link together a range of media, media outlets and musical fora which serve to deepen the urban sociomusical experience (and here one can list CBC Radio, alternative weeklies such as the *Hour* or *Mirror*—or their French equivalents, *Ici* and *Voir*—club/performance spaces, record shops, bars, etc.).

All of these spaces are structured by a number of overlapping fields which determine individual actions and group interaction. The dynamism of these fields means that they are productive as much as they are produced, influenced as much as they are influential. That is, they are settings where individuals struggle to position themselves in relation to the various hierarchies structuring the field and actors' jockeying within them is both affected by and affects their shape. The kinds movement or degrees of mobility through these fields are also determined in large part by the relationship struck between their objective structure and the individual habituses of the field's participants. The relationship between habitus and field is a complex one:

a field consists of a set of objective, historical relations between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital), while

habitus consists of a set of historical relations “deposited” within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation and action.

(Wacquant, 1992: 16)

Habitus in other words, “expresses first the result of an organizing action, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a disposition, tendency, propensity or inclination” (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 1992: 18). Even though it is both regular and regulated, there is little sense of calculation or conscious strategy in all of this; instead, habitus orients individuals and their activities in such a way that they appear natural, or as “second nature.” Thus, for those with the “right” inclination or tendency, universities can also serve as exit points, secure environments offering an opportunity to fashion a revamped identity in a context that provides the latitude needed for personal reinvention. They form part of the extended hard infrastructure which underpins musicmaking in Montreal. They are also settings that encourage new encounters and experimentation, fostering individual and socially directed actions which appear to occur without obvious deliberation, the end result being a cosmopolitan sensibility attuned to the peculiar rhythm of the city’s cultural and social life. Here then universities are, to paraphrase Bourdieu, laboratories for raising living to an art. It is important to note that in their dual capacity as points of entry and as exit points, they are spaces of possibility functioning in some fashion as introductory settings easing the transition into the broader cultural space of the city. These institutions have an established link with Montreal’s anglo-bohemia, affording its members a sense of sociohistorical continuity, but also determining how the city comes to mean what it does for them.

If they are inclined to follow the numerous trajectories and channels drawing them out from the university and into the city, Montreal's independent musical culture supplies to aspiring musicmakers a repertoire of subcultural styles and lifestyle options. The nascent cultural sensibility fostered in the university expands in an urban setting where a properly oriented habitus guarantees "survival." It does this because it is "a system of lasting and transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" (Wacquant: 18). For those whose entry and later mastery of the field comes as a result of a finely tuned sense of perception and appreciation, combined as it is with the successful deployment of their cultural, intellectual or symbolic capital, their eventual contribution acts at once as a tacit acceptance and an embodiment and objectification (as daily habit and habit of mind), of the mores, values and attitudes of the bohemian world.²⁴ Whether it be through something as seemingly innocuous as the adoption of a type of dress or as profound as inventing a new mode of existence, each is simultaneously an actualization and affirmation of the flexibility and legitimacy of Montreal's bohemian world and each in their own way works to preserve it.

While English universities and community radio serve as points of entry into Montreal's anglo-bohemia, many individuals try to make sense of the city's depressed economy while remaining true to their musical aspirations by working for any one of a number of industrial actors that play an important support role in the city's anglophone musicmaking milieu. Since 1988, and until its bankruptcy in 1998, the one-stop distributor Cargo Canada had been one such company, employing a number of native and

non-native anglophones to work in its offices and warehouse.²⁵ Although it was a national distributor, Cargo played a central role in defining the sociomusical experience of Montreal. Besides being an employer offering a workspace where musically-inclined individuals could meet, it also stocked record shops, supplying a number of them with imports and domestic releases, it often fronted the capital for many of its employees seeking to set up their own boutique labels, and, perhaps more importantly, Cargo served as an entry point to national and international music markets and audiences.²⁶

Functioning with the same insulating capacity as the English universities, a job here acted as an effective protective mechanism against social and economic conditions that might otherwise mean leaving the city. Cargo thus functions in a simple and pragmatic way: in many cases the success or failure of these industrial actors has little to do with provincial politics and linguistic tensions and more with the vicissitudes of global marketing and promotion in the major recording industry. And while taking into account the caprices of the mainstream recording industry (which reaffirm on one level a sense of suffering, struggle or neglect among local musicmakers), the interconnectedness of both industrial networks and institutional settings offers the compensatory support needed to maintain a productive cultural space and further bind individuals to the scene and the city itself.

While habitus and taste affect the ability to “get by” creatively, there are more mundane, but no less powerful, factors that also affect the social structure of the music scene. Musicmakers’ abilities to function within the scene are determined by the distribution of local resources, as well as how effectively translocal support can be utilized in order to ensure musical survival. Access and the ability to mobilize local and non-local support and resources depends on the degree to which economic, political and

social forces impinge on local circumstance, which in turn may determine both the desire and ability to get beyond it. These forces can be characterized generally as either centripetal or centrifugal, each having a bearing on the shape and meaning of musicmaking in Montreal. Centripetal forces result in a renewed sense of, and inward return to, regionalism and tradition. In a period of economic downturn or political and social upheaval, this can mean “making the most of what you’ve got,” which often translates into a subterranean form of regional boosterism and low-grade civic pride, through which Bourdieu’s notion of romantic triumph finds, effectively, a home. Efrim alludes to this, suggesting how a specific image of Montreal is deliberately cultivated:

We’re very vocal about that fact that we’re from Montreal. That’s part of our schtick. It’s conscious on that level. It’s about being really into this city and into the circumstances that have allowed us to exist. And knowing what’s different and special about this city. This all sounds smarmy but just in terms of whatever our aesthetic was when we put out the record and the CD and when we were thinking about how we wanted to present things outside of a local situation I think there was a desire to create an exaggerated mystery about what it was like to live in Montreal and Mile End.

There are two things to note here: In imposing certain limits or, as Efrim suggests, by framing constraints in such a way that “circumstances” appear imposed on you, centripetal forces mobilize a scene’s members, confirming the sense of unity and cohesion from within, helping to form a loosely bound regional niche or pole around which people and activities coalesce into a meaningful set of sociocultural practices and affective alliances. At the same time, the mythic aura surrounding Montreal—Efrim’s “exaggerated mystery”—ensures its position in the national imaginary as a bohemian enclave, lending the city’s cultural life an appearance of affective and authentic depth which is extended to the city as a whole, the conflation again of city-as-sign and city-as-

scene which can then draw people with an affinity for a similar lifestyle in from elsewhere.

Centrifugal forces, on the other hand, gain strength in response to those local restrictions which can only be alleviated by extending market and imaginative horizons beyond the narrowly city-specific. These are forces that tend towards dispersal, outward movements and gestures founded on a desire to find and build alliances that transcend or transform local parochial restrictions, locating stronger, more established links and support systems to transcend weaker local links and diminished resources. Og Records and derivative are but two examples of how an operation might orient itself outwardly, while maintaining a connection to the local. When on tour, musicians act as low-grade ambassadors of the scene, promoting the image of bohemian Montreal, ensuring that Montreal's reputation as (sub)cultural hub radiates outwards (on the nature of touring other cities, Neil stressed the importance of seeing "From Montreal" on handbills as a specific marker of the city's specialness).

As the overarching determination of social life in Montreal, language functions also to mediate the intensity and effect of both centripetal and centrifugal forces. In a predominantly bicultural and bilingual city such as Montreal, language galvanizes people along certain axes of differentiation. These can be axes shaping social as well as spatial relations, affecting where one lives in the city as well as how one moves through its cultural spaces. At the same time, linguistic tensions can heighten the desire of individuals to seek cultural asylum in a city perceived to be more amenable (another Montreal saying: "Making it in Montreal means moving to New York"). In both capacities, the distinctions drawn between language groups structure the motivation and

direction of symbolic and material processes as well as spatial and cultural practices, all of which must be considered in relation to centripetal and centrifugal forces.

While there is a great deal of overlap between francophones and anglophones (as well as allophones) in the city's musical worlds, the distinctions between them often make their way back into cultural practices rather obliquely.²⁷ How these two worlds might come together is the subject of some debate:

Whatever scene exists now, for it to continue that sort of outreach (to francophones) is going to have to happen. I'm unhappy that it hasn't happened yet. I don't know how to make that manifest but I think it's important. The fact is that this scene, the community I feel part of is shrinking everyday. There's still people leaving this city daily. There's still people breaking down just due to the stress of the city. Maybe not leaving, but they're removing themselves from the scene. There's always people coming to replace them, but they're young, they're just getting into school. It's a bit harder. You have to wait for those people to decide whether they want to stay here or decided to do something outside of school. Before they really become an active part of anything going on here. I think for the security of anyone trying to do anything local that sort of outreach has to happen.... There is a huge division between francophone and anglophone musicians. I know there's a parallel universe going on among francophones. There are bands that are mirrors of us, but we live in ignorance of their existence and they live in ignorance of ours. I know that for a year there has been a French space with bands doing the same sort of thing that we had no idea about a block over.

(Efrim)

In describing the cross-over potential of francophone and anglophone crowds, Efrim's comments suggest that the uneasy and uneven coexistence of centripetal and centrifugal forces in Montreal has a profound effect on social and musical interaction in the city. Moreover, these comments suggest just how deeply-rooted the distinctions are between francophone and anglophone musicmakers and their respective musical worlds. At times,

this means rendering the francophone scene barely visible or impenetrable; at others, its very presence makes the city seem a foreign place.

Language, then, heavily inflects not only the visible and audible aspects of musicmaking and its relation to the cultural spaces of Montreal, but at a fundamental level also shapes the networks, or more specifically, the systems and patterns of cooperation structuring musical culture. Finnegan's term "pathways" for these musically-based webs of interconnectedness, and the apparatuses that underpin them, allows a more nuanced sense of how certain networks function socially and spatially (Finnegan, 1990: 323). They can be construed as mappings of the anglophone habitus onto both imaginative spaces and built environments, constituting the affective alliances that are inscribed not only onto the scene's imaginary but also its relation to the city. They are as, David Chaney suggests, a series of connections, a multiplicity of affiliations that constitute local frameworks and as such can be imaginative frameworks as well as frameworks for action (Chaney, 1997: 141). In the case of both the francophone and anglophone musical worlds, pathways provide opportunities for a number of physical and imaginative encounters which reinforce, reaffirm, and ultimately guarantee the continuation of musical cultures across and through disparate institutional sites, industrial networks and cultural spaces.

The successful negotiation of Montreal's real and symbolic pathways is contingent upon how one uses the industrial infrastructure, as well as how effectively one navigates through the institutional and social networks binding the city's music scenes together. This complex musical world and its relation to the sociolinguistic dimensions of cultural life has led to notable developments in the local music industry. Over the last

twenty-five years, the francophone music industry has evolved and matured substantially.

Line Grenier states:

(T)hey also achieved such a success because, despite their relatively small size, their almost chronic under financing and the lack of appropriate industrial and commercial infrastructures, they played the cards of diversification and vertical integration well. Using similar strategies as those adopted by transnational firms, albeit on a much smaller scale, they were quick to form allied industry interests in artist management as well as television, film, video and stage production...but perhaps most importantly, québécois indies could also rely on an increasingly active network of locally owned national distributors.

(1996: 315)

The emergence of a strong independent music scene and community among francophone musicmakers parallels in many respects the kind of musical world created by Montreal's anglophone independent scene. However, the scope and reach of each scene's musical output is unevenly distributed, with francophone musicmakers bumping up against the constraints of a global but still much narrower (and predominantly anglo-centric) audience.

For this and other reasons, the somewhat divergent evolution of these two musical worlds has played a significant role in determining how musicmakers relate to one another in Montreal. Emerging from localized processes of individuation and in relation to translocalized networks of inclusion and exclusion unevenly structured along language lines, there has been a pronounced effect on how each musical world's pathways cater to the many needs and desires of their respective musicmakers. The different direction and motivations of these musical worlds means that, for example, support personnel are utilized differently. Both these worlds would fail to flourish if they were not supported by a broad range of local resources, reinforced by the extended patterns of cooperation

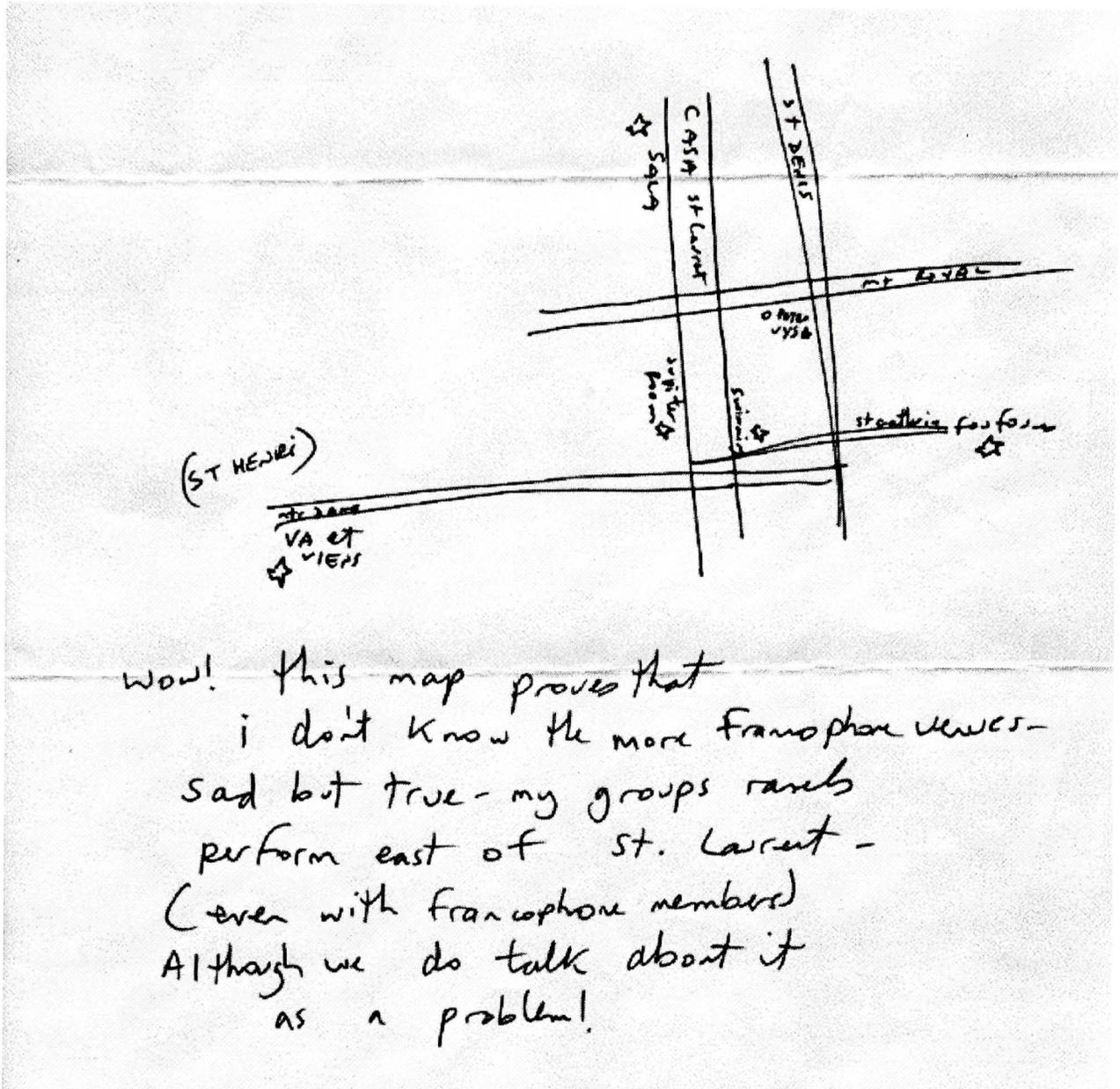
and reciprocal ties established between members of various artworlds and the institutions and industries which define them (Becker, 1982). This has certain social consequences, for as the situation at the city's anglo-dominated universities and Cargo Records suggests, institutional and industrial modalities shape artistic and bohemian attitudes along language lines, returning us again to issues surrounding aesthetic autonomy and creative independence as well as how a sense of belonging is articulated in terms of inclusivity and exclusivity.

While these musical worlds are not mutually exclusive—their borders being semi-permeable—in the case of many anglophones this has meant a continual reliance upon established English-based cultural industries, institutions, spaces and resource pools as well as the pathways they generate and support. This further ensures that the structures determining the shape and reach of many pathways remains highly selective, exclusive and exclusionary. As dependent as they are upon symbolic, industrial and social networks, these are affiliations, local frameworks and spatial practices where the degree of interaction is heavily influenced by language, a phenomenon which requires a more in-depth discussion as to how the images and myths of Montreal come to affect social relations and cultural practices.

Tracing Out Bohemia's Pathways: A Graphic Interlude

The sociospatial nature of musicmaking in Montreal can take on a range of meanings when its significant sites and pathways are translated graphically. Below is a sample of some of the maps musicmakers submitted, many of which include the industrial and institutional sites vital to musicmaking's production and reproduction.

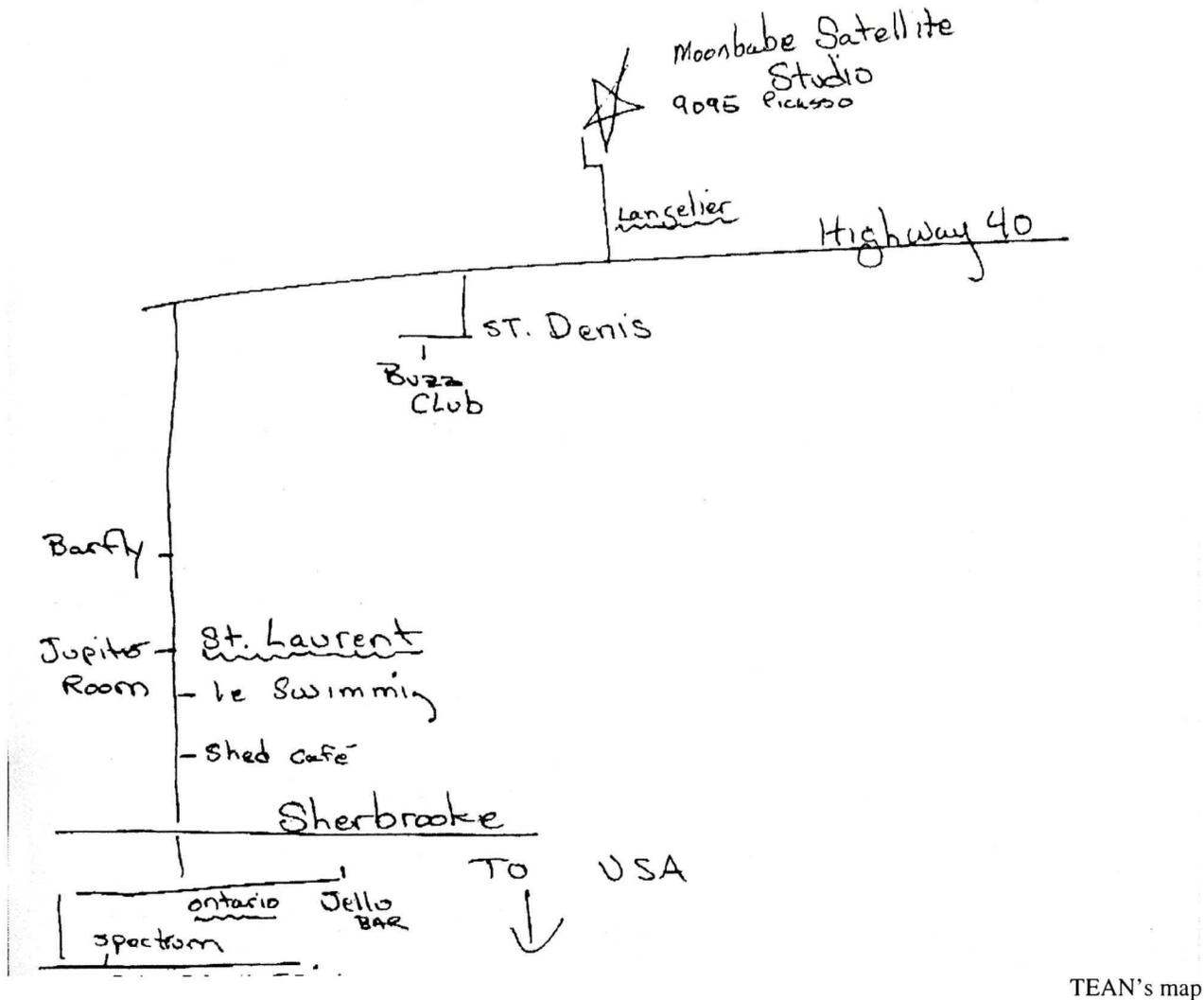
the indie rock and ska scenes as well as her small-scale one-woman show which relies on a minimum of equipment (a keyboard).



Jon's map

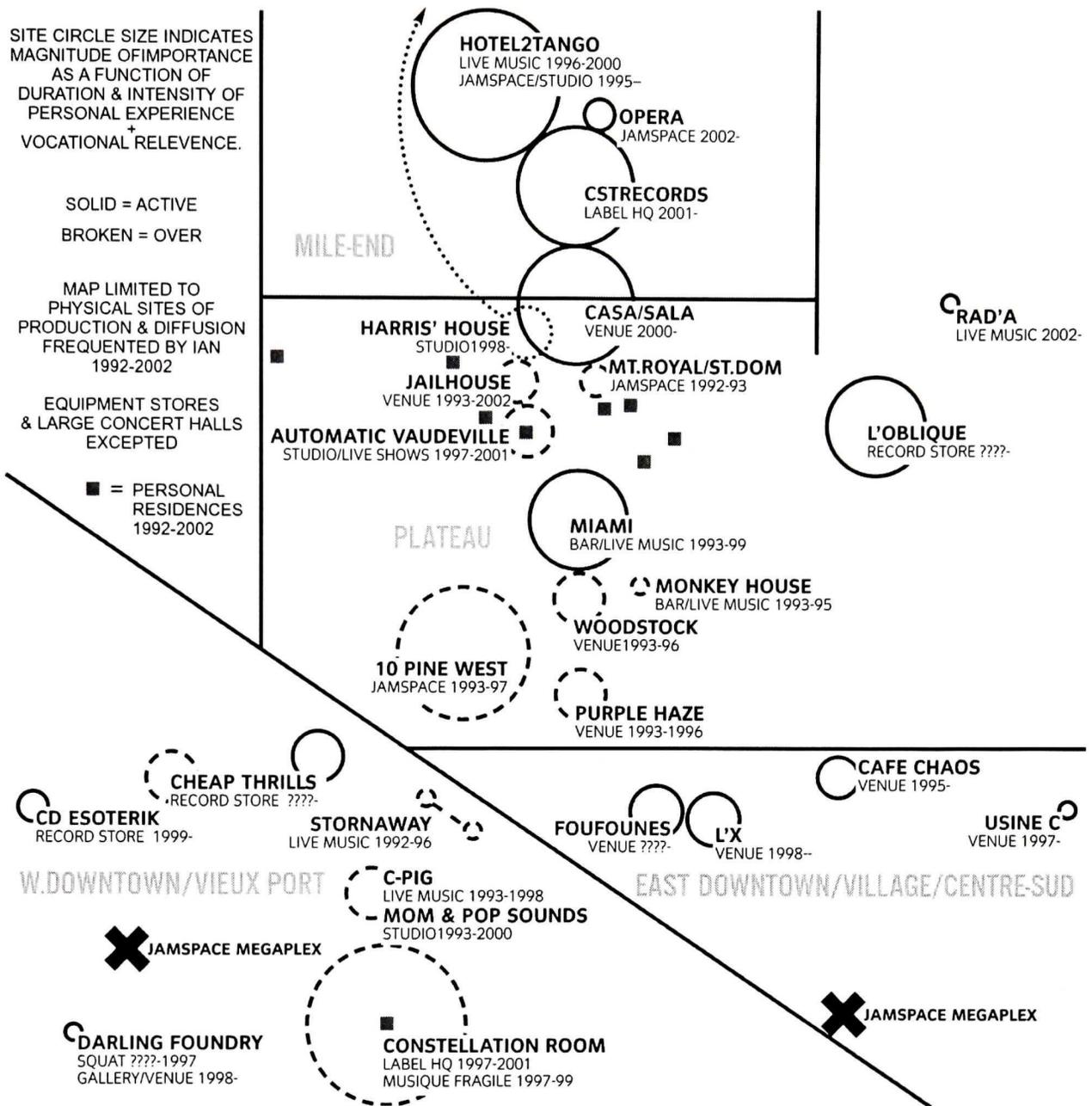
Jon's depiction of the Montreal scene, while slightly more schematic, prompted him to highlight the absence of francophone venues in his rendering. This is worth noting as he has been an active part of the scene for two decades, which, as he suggests, often involved playing with francophone musicians. However, the ability to move further

Chan Gallery). Greg also provides commentary on the restricted nature of certain sites (Casa del Popolo has a “super-arty atmosphere,” which contrasts to Krista’s attribute of “indie intimacy”). Much of his commentary evaluates the sites he visits most often.



TEAN’s map

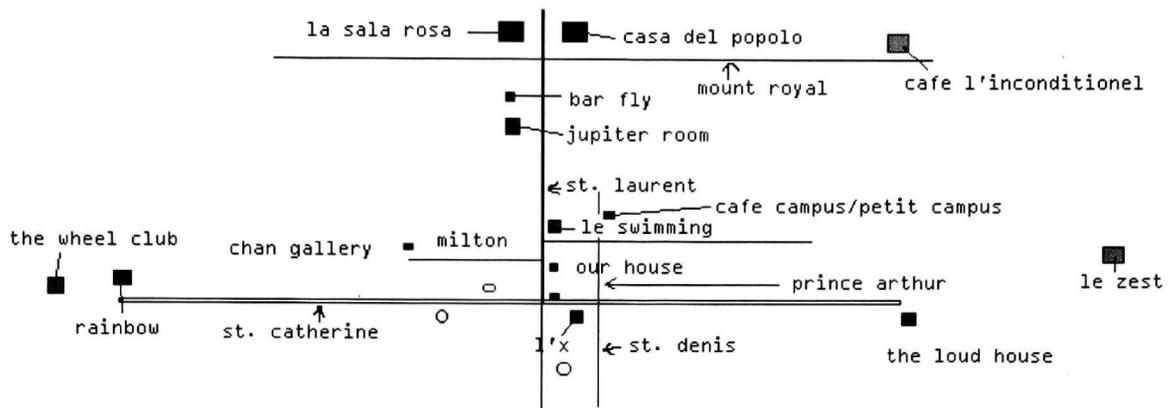
TEAN’s map, much like Jon’s, is straightforward and simply maps out his musical routine, noting performance spaces (Le Swimming, Spectrum, Jupiter Room), and the recording studio north of the city. The addition of “To USA” alludes to TEAN’s sense that the Montreal scene has generally ignored his music. He suggested that his work was better received in New York City (this echoes a stockphrase often heard in Montreal: “To make it in Montreal means moving to New York”).



Ian's map

Ian's map takes some artistic license with the request, moving away from the preferred grid vision of the city, replacing it with a more abstract rendering of the Montreal scene. Notably, his does not include extra-musical sites, but does provide a sense of the biographical movement through the city, a temporality not accounted for in other maps. The sociomusical experience of Montreal depicted here is one marked by a keen awareness of emotional attachment to numerous places, an affectivity which has

proven itself highly mobile, emphasizing how Ian's commitment to the city is founded upon an aesthetic experience of place.



- unlabeled yellow: larger clubs such as club soda, metropolis, spectrum, that do bigger shows - both french and english.
- small blue: house shows, small indie rock/indie pop shows
- red: clubs/bars/restaurants that do medium sized indie-rock, rock and roll, hip-hop, electronic shows, as well as punk, emo, hardcore, metal, etc.
- cafe l'inconditionel: all ages hardcore/metal shows.
- traditional country, bluegrass, and hillbilly music. ■ le zest: stoner rock, etc.
- s.a.t.: electronic music. ■ le swimming: mostly funk.

Tim's map

Tim's map offers yet another view of Montreal musicmaking, identifying sites according to genre. His is the only map that explicitly considers genre as a guide to plotting the spatial co-ordinates of the scene. Of this choice, Tim noted:

I guess I drew that because I feel that the "scene" is often fragmented by specific genres, as in certain people limit themselves to certain mini-scenes. For instance you will probably not see ninety-nine percent of the hipster indie-rock kids at a hardcore/metal show and vice versa, although there is certainly some crossover between groups.

I think this does play into picking where to play. indie rock bands won't play at the loud house (crust punk/political punk/hardcore shows) and Casa del Popolo doesn't do "hardcore" shows (or didn't for a long time).

I don't think that language plays into this much - except that there seem to be no French indie-rock bands, whereas there tend to be more french punk

rock bands. In terms of certain bands playing in certain areas because of their language I don't seem to see this.

Tim's comments notwithstanding, overall, generic concerns, while important in discussions of musicmaking (recall Rick's comments on hardcore, for example), appear secondary to affective attachment to place when it comes to mapping the scene.

The graphic representation of Montreal musicmaking in many ways concretizes what might otherwise be a somewhat more abstract depiction revealed through interviews. Here you have a clearer rendering of the scene's infrastructures, with some attention paid to extra-musical sites and degrees of affective attachments to various places. For the most part however, more qualitative properties of musicmaking are difficult to represent graphically (although Ian's map does creatively attempt to represent the levels of affect attached to particular sites). The bohemian ambience of the city remains an elusive element as such. It still functions to bind musicmakers to Montreal and to one another, but there should be another way to get at its social value and semiotic function. A description of place-image and the various myths which circulate in Montreal can tell us more about the nature of collective representation and its part in structuring the imaginative dimensions attached to musicmaking in the city.

The Myth of Bohemia

There is not a great capital in the world to-day without its purely imagined and invented "Bohemia"...and in this "Bohemia" are supposed to dwell the "Bohemians." There never was such a place even in the conventions of literature. It is now and always has been as mythical as More's "Utopia" or as the gardens of the Hesperides.

(Raoul Auernheimer, 1922)

Montreal's like that expatriate community in Paris between the wars. The kind of sense of moving to a place which is cheap, where you don't necessarily speak the language, which is somewhat depressed, not only economically, but also in spirit and beautiful in its decrepitude.

(Gen)

The (city's) political and economic history over the last thirty years has created the conditions upon which people, either from Montréal or not, are much freer just simply on economic grounds to pursue their muse or whatever. There is a palpable, but hard to define atmosphere of alienation or tension or something, maybe even decay as well, that ends up having its effect.

(Ian)

“People do not live in places but in descriptions of places,” the poet Wallace Stevens wrote to his friend Henry Church, describing his inspiration to compose “Description Without a Place.”²⁸ Gen and Ian accept that they inhabit an image of Montreal as a bohemia as much as they inhabit Montreal itself, thus simultaneously affirming and denying Stevens’ and Auernheimer’s assessments of how meanings accrue to places. Gen and Ian’s comments, if considered alongside those of the other musicmakers cited here, indicate another important dimension crucial to the maintenance of Montreal’s image as the perfect safe harbour for a flourishing urban bohemia. Although some elements of it are articulated through the mutually reinforcing elements of habitus and field, embodied in habit and tastes or objectified in style, the successful reproduction of the image of Montreal as an anglo-bohemia depends also on the narrativization of local experiences and their eventual projection to others outside of Montreal. Its mythic qualities radiate outward, taking shape through mobile (and mobilized) forms of cultural representation of the city, with a specific cultural identity produced through a complex matrix of articulations and mediations. Montreal’s promise of bohemian life—whose local flavour and non-local appeal, as the *Globe and Mail* puts

it, is founded on its apparent “laissez-faire contentment,”²⁹—as well as its most recent structure of feeling, was voiced in Coupland’s slacker *ur*-text, Generation X (he lived in Montreal while writing it). The mediated experience of place emerges through the articulation of indigenous idiosyncrasies, including those embedded in narratives of place, with local cultural and social histories coded with the semiotic richness needed to create the mythical textures (and in the case of novels and news stories, textualizations) and meaningful aura attractive to both local and non-local musicmakers (and bohemians generally).

Mark Gottdiener reminds us that “research on collective representations must connect symbols with social interests and the use of images as tools in specific forums. They are mutable and socially grounded rather than free-floating phantasms disembodied from social contexts” (1986: 209). The nature of mythmaking in Montreal, the production and reproduction of an anglo-bohemia is tied to the process of musicmaking in ways which reinforce sociospatial distinctions. Gottdiener continues: “(E)ven the most common collective representation for a city may be opposed by an alternate image representing an oppositional view of the urban past and future. Beneath the level of appearance... a battle of signs often rages which signifies fundamental differences in conceptions of the urban interest” (210). There is no consensus as to which collective representation of Montreal best suits musicmaking, although each and every musicmaker works with an image of the city which guides their behaviour and determines the sociomusical experience had in Montreal:

One purpose of collective representation is to attract or repel, but there are others, such as those which connote social functions: entertainment—“downtown”; leisure—“Belle Harbor”; or commerce—“city of industry.” The principal aspect of these signs

is that they are part of the economic and political group practices which constitute the very core of urban activities. In sum, they are not artifacts removed from the daily life of urban residents which elicit behaviour... Signs of place are mediations organized at the level of social interaction itself and utilized as tools to facilitate everyday life by helping to organize and direct action.

(211)

“Paris of the North,” “like Casablanca,” or “Paris between the Wars” are just some of the images attached to social life in Montreal. The weight of history, too, affects the way in which Montreal is figured in the social imaginary. More generally, at a material and experiential level the ease or difficulty with which one can use the scene’s pathways to navigate through the cultural spaces of Montreal also introduces a whole range of tensions which determine the discursive shape musicmaking in Montreal. There are also fundamental tensions between the forces of continuity and change, fixity and flow, margin and mainstream, centre and periphery, and, notably, between notions of local participation as a sign of resistant/idealist regionalism versus global/translocal oriented musical activity as a mark of a pragmatic/realist cosmopolitanism. If we understand these antimonies as unfolding along an axis of differentiation structured by culture and language, they emphasize the way in which these spaces are often fraught with visible/audible and invisible/inaudible conflicts, irresolvable contradictions and a number of competing discourses. Taken together, they provide the discursive and imaginative frameworks for the mythmaking that underpins a scene’s symbolic infrastructure. They also underline the *frisson* that motivates musicmakers to act in the manner that they do, shaping the range and direction of musical and social practices as well the degree of interaction between members of a scene. As such, they are highly charged determinants in how the scene becomes rhetorically constructed through a variety of media, individuals

and institutions, informing the practice of mythmaking and determining the degree to which this discrete lifestyle option remains sustainable (for insiders) and appealing (to outsiders).

Generally speaking, this type of mythmaking serves as an indispensable form of cultural representation, a rhetorical and discursive mechanism which while at the same time it grounds and binds musicmakers locally serves also to attract other non-local musicmakers. An integral part of the symbolic framework underpinning musicmaking, the store of images mythmaking produces ensures a certain continuity over discontinuity, a sense of coherence in the face of incoherence, or in the words of Barthes (and this is its ideological function also), a “blissful clarity” that can easily ameliorate and aggravate any number of anxieties (Barthes, 1972:143). Myths are also important rhetorical and discursive strategies many musicmakers consciously and unconsciously employ to make sense of a given place and lend meaningful charge to their musical practices. Myths in this case serve to anchor musicmakers in localities, establishing or renewing narratives and symbolic systems which lend affective depth, coherence, a sense of shared experience and belonging, semiotic richness, historicity and thus a distinctive cultural identity to a specific place. In another sense, a successful myth can gain over time the symbolic charge that attracts outsiders, which in turn confirms the value of its mythic status and ensures its survival. Myths secure their place in the local imaginary in the first case through an accumulation of historical encrustations, with the accretion of mythic signifiers giving a place a fixed and meaningful unity established through the multiple articulations of regionally-specific systems of representation, or what Rob Shields calls *place-image*:

These are the various discrete meanings associated with real places or regions regardless of their character in reality.... A set of core images forms a widely disseminated and commonly held set of images of a place or space. These form a relatively stable group of ideas in currency, reinforced by their communication value as conventions circulating in a discursive economy.

(1991: 60-61)

Place-images are rooted in idiosyncratic symbolic and imaginative frameworks which help to embed individuals and groups in a particular place and at the same time serve as framing mechanisms that encourage or circumscribe cultural activity and expression.

Place-images function in tandem with myth-making to establish a city-as-sign (see also, Short and Kim, 1998). With a cultural identity organized, articulated or communicated in such a way that it can attract or repel people and ideas, the resulting activity contributes to the broader sense of horizontal flow created by the movement of musicmakers, commodities and ideas across and through a scene.

The fixity and flow which characterizes the tenor of city life is easily transposed to descriptions of musical scenes. In Montreal, this sense of fixity and flow in its musical scenes is inflected by the myths and place-images accruing to social and cultural life in the city. The two overarching and intertwined representations that form the discursive envelopes containing social and cultural life on the margins in Montreal are found in the myth of two solitudes and the place-image of Montreal's anglo-bohemia. Together they function to reinforce the notions suffering and survival which are the scene's central tropes.³⁰ With regard to the place-image of Montreal's anglo-bohemia, the perception among musicmakers is that there are crucial qualitative differences to social life and cultural expression in Montreal (notwithstanding Coupland's belief in the city's sartorial idiosyncracies). These differences are marks of distinction, articulating an

exceptionalism rendered most often in terms of social life, producing a city-as-scene/city-as-sign whose enduring mythical dimensions within a national urban hierarchy function to distinguish Montreal from other Canadian or North American cities. Thus, in considering the city's myths and place-images, what remains particularly salient are the means by which these narratives and representations are produced and reproduced, how their symbolic dimensions are internalized, embodied and inhabited through lived experience, how they are then articulated, referred to, reinforced or transformed through cultural practices and musical forms, and, more generally, how they mediate the sociomusical experience of Montreal.

Both myth and place-image function as simple and reductive stereotypes or cultural fictions, convenient symbolic shorthand standing in for the complexity of social relations and interactions in the city. Given this elliptical character, they have a tendency to obscure or ignore other aspects of social life in the city. Anglophone independent musicmakers, for instance, often talk in terms of francophone and anglophone, with no mention of allophone participation. While the notion of two-solitudes might be less tenable given demographic shifts over last fifty years, it still remains part of a strategy of meaning-making and thus essential to cultivating a sense of belonging. Because myths and place-images are fixed as always-already there, as a deeply entrenched system of meaning and representation inscribed onto Montreal's cultural and social landscape, etched into the (local and national) social imaginary, they ultimately mediate the degrees and kinds of social interaction and lived experience as well as cultural expression. They are as much a product of material and social conditions in the city as much as they produce them. As an integral part of lived experience and as signs of the dense symbolic

texture of Montreal, myths and place-images are actively and consciously (and unconsciously) reproduced in ways that influence cultural practice and the range of movement within the city and its cultural spaces. In affecting and effecting discursive economies and material practices, they both describe and prescribe cultural activity and social relations in the city.

It should be noted here that the recent rise in Montreal's fortunes have created yet another site of struggle for anglophone musickmakers. While much of this discussion addresses Montreal at one of its economic lows, even in its current prosperity anglophones can still imagine themselves marginalized. Rent increases and a sense that access to this upwardly mobile trend are limited by language are understood by many as a defining feature of the city's current cultural landscape. The perception of anglophone exclusion from the city's current economic upswing has meant that the disenfranchisement once adopted by choice among anglophones has been taken now as hardened social fact, providing further evidence for some that the ghettoization of anglophones continues apace. More inspiration for the conspiracy theorist, Douglas Coupland might suggest. Bohemia hardly disappears in light of this; instead, its contours gain sharper definition, its purpose given more gravity, its value as a secure social and culture enclave heightened.

As part of a social and aesthetic lineage which extends from salons in nineteenth century Paris to the happenings in 1960s New York, Montreal musical life is solidly entrenched within a matrix of mobile and durable social, spatial and cultural practices which have always determined the means through which bohemians make a habitable world out of seemingly inhospitable urban decay, economic decline and cultural

detritus.³¹ The dissemination, reproduction, mediation and the continuing tenacity of this image of Montreal among musicmakers remains embedded within an interlocking network of institutions, industries and urban sites. It finds expression on Montreal's streets, in studios, performance and rehearsal spaces, clubs, bars, between the pages of newspapers and fanzines and community radio airwaves. These multiple articulations function to produce and reproduce the discursive and symbolic space of a group united in common cultural purpose. At the same time, the imaginative and affective hold of these images is indirectly reinforced through English-dominated (or anglo-centric) institutions such as universities and radio as well as Montreal-based segments of the global recording industry. These institutional and industrial sites have a dual function which contributes to the perpetuation of both myth and place-image: to insulate many anglophone musicmakers from the negative effects language tensions might have on cultural practice, and to serve as conduits or points of entry into the anglo-bohemian underworld. By learning and acquiring the specialized knowledges required to manoeuvre around these sites and using the interlocking ancillary networks connected to them, anglo musicmakers can transform their situation in such a way that any sense of "suffering" or "frustration" is either rendered irrelevant, displaced, temporarily suspended or, at some strategic level, renewed. Taking advantage of the various networks available to them, be they industrial, institutional or social, anglophone musicmakers in Montreal continually find the means to establish and work within a cultural and discursive economy that appears to have only tenuous relation to other economies in the city, rhetorically distancing themselves from larger political dimensions of life in Montreal, but simultaneously reproducing,

sometimes acutely and sometimes obliquely, longstanding social divisions and cultural distinctions.

NOTES

¹ Cited in Deminchinsky and Kalman Naves, 2000: 168.

² Their efforts complement an earlier French anthology, Montréal imaginaire (Pierre Nepveu and Gilles Marcotte, eds., 1992) and are coincident with Ville imaginaire, Ville identitaire, (Morisset, Noppen, Saint-Jacques, eds.).

³ See also Duncan, James. The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyian Kingdom.

⁴ Brian Trehearne, however, deliberately avoids “models of literary history...that see the critic’s first business as the narration of literary events—private relations, settings, the stuff of the ‘scene’” (Trehearne, 1999: 4).

⁵ Walt Whitman, “*Song of Myself*”

⁶ In Stanton and Tinguely, 2001: 8.

⁷ Ibid: 12.

⁸ Ibid: 12.

⁹ In Barclay, Jack, Schneider, 2001: 123.

¹⁰ Ibid: 123.

¹¹ From the introduction to Richard Linklater’s Slacker, St Martin’s Press: New York, 1992, p.2.

¹² “A life of ‘laissez-faire contentment’” *Globe and Mail*, March 27, 1999 p.C11.

¹³ See Straw, Will “Montreal Confidential: Notes on an Imagined City” in *Cineaction*, No.28, Spring 1992 pp. 58-64; see also Gilmore, John. Swinging in Paradise: The Story of Jazz in Montreal, Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1988; Weintraub, William. City Unique Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and ‘50s, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996.

¹⁴ See Germain and Rose, 2000.

¹⁵ See Graña and Graña, 1990: xv. Elizabeth Wilson also says as much: “cafe culture was the consummation of the bohemians’ love affair with urban life.” (Wilson, 2000: 34).

¹⁶ In 1996, Montréal had the highest rate of unemployment of 23 North American cities at 11.9% (Bureau of Labour Statistics, Statistics Canada, 1997). Ironically, among North American cities, according to a Price-Waterhouse survey on high-tech employment, Montréal had the highest percentage of high-tech workers per capita. See also: “High-tech boom reveals Montréal’s tale of 2 economies” *Toronto Star*, October 20, 1997: A1; “Montréal Holds First Place for Poverty” *The Calgary Herald*, June 26, 1996, p.A9.; “Montréal’s Economy Stagnating in Poverty, Study Says: The city has the highest rate of unemployment of any City in North America” *Vancouver Sun*, June 14, 1997, p.A9.

¹⁷ The Montreal Gazette ran a series on the ‘new anglo,’ a series of stories dedicated to exploring the lives of anglophones who’ve decided to stay in Montreal and typified in stories like “New face of Quebec anglos: English-speaking Quebec has been transformed by social, political and economic change” Montreal Gazette, June 12, 1999, p.1.

¹⁸ David Hesmondhalgh suggests independent music (indie) “proclaimed itself to be superior to other genres not only because it was more relevant or authentic to the youth

who produced and consumed it...but also because it was based on new relationships between creativity and commerce” (1998: 35).

¹⁹ Two of the respondents are from Ottawa, one from Toronto, the other from Winnipeg.

²⁰ For more on the devolution of Montreal’s economy over the course of the twentieth century, see Code, G. Lewis, 1996a; 1996b; Linteau, Durocher, Robert and Ricard, eds., 1991.

²¹ Alan Blum, 2001: 26

²² For more on this, see Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, 2000.

²³ McGill has long been considered a “fortress of English power in Québec” (see Dion, 1972:66-79).

²⁴ John Fiske defines the habitus as “the meaning of habitat, habitant, the processes of habitation and habit, particularly habits of thought”(Fiske, in Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, 1992: 155).

²⁵ “Cargo Files for Bankruptcy Little Impact on Music Industry Seen” *Billboard*, January 24, 1998.

²⁶ As it restructured and downsized in an effort to accommodate changes in promotion and market demand, Cargo’s reputation among musicmakers was compromised, leading to a perception among local (and non-local) musicmakers that it was unable to adequately support local and national musical needs. Cargo declared bankruptcy in December, 1997, leaving a number of bands and labels mired in legal hassles in their quest to recoup 7-inches, LPs and CDs that had been abandoned at pressing plants. The effect its closing had on independent music production was significant: Cargo was a major supplier of advance capital for independent labels in Montreal as well as in the rest of Canada, allowing a number of them to pursue and direct their resources towards a variety of musical projects simultaneously. When Cargo collapsed, the capital disappeared, as did any affiliated label’s ability to concentrate on a number of current or future musical projects.

²⁷ The myth of two solitudes was the tongue-in-cheek inspiration for a franco/anglo punk/indie compilation of the same name: *2 Solitudes* (En Guard Records, 1992).

²⁸ See Holly Stevens, ed. 1981, no. 494. The poem itself can be found in Wallace Stevens: The Collected Poems, New York: Vintage Books, 1982. pp.339-345.

²⁹ *Globe and Mail*, C11.

³⁰ There are a number of apparent paradoxes which define Montreal’s socioeconomic life. In 1996 Montréal had the highest rate of unemployment of 23 North American cities at 11.9% (Bureau of Labour Statistics, Statistics Canada, 1997). Ironically, among North American cities, according to a Price-Waterhouse survey on high-tech employment, Montréal had the highest percentage of high-tech workers per capita. See, “High-tech boom reveals Montreal’s tale of 2 economies” *Toronto Star*, October 20, 1997: A1. See also, “Montreal Holds First Place for Poverty” *The Calgary Herald*, June 26, 1996, p.A9.; “Montreal’s Economy Stagnating in Poverty, Study Says: The city has the highest rate of unemployment of any City in North America” *Vancouver Sun*, June 14, 1997, p.A9.. In 1997, the *Utne Reader* ranked Montreal as one of the top five ‘hippest’ places to live in North America (*Utne Reader*, No.75, September, 1997). Three years later, reported rates of poverty place Montreal at the top of the list of surveyed Canadian cities. Correlating data taken from Statistics Canada, one survey suggested that 41% of Montreal’s

population lived below the poverty line. What this figure fails to take into account, as critics noted, was a basic needs scale, which would more accurately reflect quality of life standards. To complicate this image of Montreal, *Wired* magazine in July 2000 rated the city one of the top high-tech centres in North America, ranked alongside New York and Seattle, making it one of “46 locations that matter most in the new digital geography.” (*Wired*, July 2000, pp.258-271).

³¹ See Bourdieu, 1992; Gruen, 1966, respectively.

CONCLUSION

One concept which escapes the antimony of the universal and the particular has long been familiar to us: the example. In any context where it exerts its force, the example is characterized by the fact that it holds for all cases of the same type, and, at the same time, it is included among these. It is one singularity among others, which, however, stands for each of them and serves for all.

(Giorgio Agamben)¹

Giorgio Agamben singles out here a defining element of the example, a fundamental tension, one that also courses throughout this particular study. This project has yoked together theory building and a specific case study, taking the general and the specific, the particular and the universal, as its guiding principles. Montreal was chosen as the example which would demonstrate how certain sociospatial practices, such as musicmaking, produce and are produced by certain spatial formations (in this case, scene and bohemia). The singularity of Montreal was stressed, but an effort was made to suggest possible theoretical extrapolations, the idea being that there are aspects of musicmaking in Montreal which can be considered generalizable according to certain analytical models and conceptual frameworks. This was done by introducing three inter-related frameworks for the analysis of musicmaking and its relationship to the city. The experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks were used to get at the relationship between cultural practice and placemaking, but also to describe how certain representations of place carry with them semiotic and social significance which in turn effect how musicmaking unfolds in the city.

The experiential framework was used to consider how the city as both site and object of knowledge is determined by, as well as determines, the horizons of possibility circumscribing sociomusical experience. More specifically, this framework was used to

enumerate the spatial and temporal dimensions of musical life in Montreal as they become embedded in particular places and embodied in particular movements through the city. The results reveal patterns of individuation and belonging that form the means through which musicmakers identify and become attuned to the city's specific rhythms.

The materialist framework told us more about the political economy of the scene, revealing the broader social and institutional structures determining the specific experience of the city. It was used to examine how the aforementioned rhythms of the city are organized and ordered, both spatially and temporally, through various networks, circuits and nodes, thereby linking routes to routines and provoking analyses which can elaborate upon the social mechanics of the scene in terms of the numerous forces shaping it.

The discursive framework enabled a consideration of how the image of the city affects musical and social practice and how the semiotic contours of Montreal musicmaking are produced and reproduced. It was used to explore the more symbolic relation of scene and bohemia to Montreal, how they both signify a city's "cityness" to locals and non-locals. It located the imaginative structure of bohemia and scene within a larger history of representation of Montreal, and took account of the social value and deep resonance of certain narratives and myths associated with musicmaking and cities, singling out their bearing on musical practice and urban social relations.

Each framework lent itself to specific methodologies: the experiential relied upon qualitative techniques such as mapping, diaries and interviews as a way of documenting the individual experience of the scene; the materialist framework was based upon detailed consideration of the socio-economic dimensions of the city generally and the micro-

economy of the scene specifically; and the discursive framework required analysis of qualitative data, as well as a consideration of the various media discourses and collective representations which support and lend texture to musicmaking in Montreal. Bringing the results together provided a better picture of the way in which social action, imagination and material processes work in concert and conflict as motivating factors in the social construction of the musicmaking and its relation to the city of Montreal. Analysing the Montreal music scene according to these frameworks encouraged a thicker description of the sociomusical experience of the city. As an interpretative schema, this particular model also illuminated the cultural specificity of Montreal and outlined in greater detail the sociospatial dimensions of musicmaking in the city.

Montreal, as it was described by many musicmakers, is a city that supplies specific resource pools, a knowledge base and a suitably grey economic climate that is more than agreeable to the demands of the cultural production associated with independent musicmaking. For a number of musicmakers in Montreal, their relationship to the city is founded on an aesthetic experience of place and musicmaking that frames their affective attachment to the city and one another. In this sense, musicmaking in Montreal is about the relationship of aesthetic politics to the creation of an ideal urban experience and the cultivation of a chosen lifestyle. Montreal is cast by local anglophone musicmakers and represented to outsiders as a city more willing to accommodate modest musical aspirations, where careerist impulses are heavily circumscribed, and where threats of artistic compromise are rendered moot. In terms of the political economy of the scene, for many musicmakers the success of the scene is inversely proportional to Montreal's economic state. Instability and isolation are valorized, ironized in many

cases, and are charged with a positive valence, imparting to the city its continuing allure as well instituting as a range of expectations on the part of local and non-local musicmakers. That said, in order to negotiate the space of the musicmaking properly requires having the wherewithal to utilize the amenities at hand, both material and symbolic, in an effort to realize the desire for living an artful life in the city. It also means having the frame of mind, the kind of urban sensibility which interprets the city as a space of creative possibility, keenly attuned to its potentialities, able to identify and mobilize these resources strategically.

Consider also that the fluctuating population of the anglophone community, where outmigrancy among those who are the culture's most active participants (24-34 year olds) has been historically highest, has created a consistently unstable and turbulent space for cultural production. In this respect, Montreal has been, and remains, a space marked by uneven flow and mobility, where boundaries are continually redefined and new geographies of exclusion and inclusion are continually dissolved and reconstituted. But as these interviews, maps, and diaries show, the way in which that turbulence is managed by musicmakers, through varied responses, has led to the elaboration of spatial and social relations which have proven in many ways, and for different reasons at different times, to be quite resilient. Different types of interaction between anglophone and francophone cultures at various moments over the last few years have produced a variety of different spaces, which are themselves contingent upon economic, political and demographic factors. This study has utilized an approach to urban musicmaking which was meant to provoke a deeper analysis of the sociomusical experience of anglophones in Montreal. It is one which allows for a fuller sense of "radical contextualism", as Grossberg would suggest, but one which also

prompts more generalizable assertions. It is not a definitive examination by any means; rather it remains an attempt to document, through a medley of research methods, the degree to which cultural life and expression are influenced, shaped by, as well as contingent upon, other dimensions of city life, be they political, economic or linguistic. In the final analysis, it describes how Montreal is experienced and lived through the prism of musicmaking.

That said, we can return briefly to a Merton-inspired question, which can orient us towards a conclusion. “What is a city?” Lewis Mumford asked in 1937. He replied:

One may describe the city, in its social aspect, as a special framework directed toward the creation of differentiated opportunities for a common life and a significant collective drama.

The drama of city life, its promise of solitude but also solidarity: these are the twinned forces which amplify our experience of the city, bring to the fore its existential enigmas and set the stage upon which they unfold. With Mumford’s question guiding us, let me develop this somewhat further, by posing yet more questions. One of the main questions we need to be reminded of is that posed by Martin Krampen (asked in Chapter Two): “What kind of meaning is connected to the city and by what kind of mechanisms?” (1979: 2); or, to follow from Hubert Damisch: “What is the nature indissolubly, of the city as reality, as image, and as symbol?” (Damisch, 2001: 19). This may lead us away from the materiality of the city, in its emphasis on the immaterial, evanescent qualities of the city, but it is the ephemerality of the city, its transience, as well as its resistance to change, that should guide any consideration of musicmaking in the city. The specificity of the city, its exemplary status Agamben might suggest, is realized at those points where solitude and solidarity intersect, in singular and shared moments, ineffable and fleeting

though they may be. Musicmaking, as Blum's discussion of scenes reminds us, provides precisely those moments of public intimacy.

But musicmaking also sets a stage for a diverse range of performances and encourages different levels of engagement with the city. Of this performative dimension, Mumford makes a claim for the theatricality of the city when he says: "The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and *is* the theater" (20). It is in the act of musicmaking that existential dramas unfold where individual desires and collective demands mesh to form a new kind of social space, whether that takes the form of a distinct scene or bohemia, or whether these spatial by-products mutually reinforce one another. Mumford continues: "It is in the city, the city as theatre, that man's more purposive activities are focused, and work out, through conflicting and cooperative personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations" (22). Musicmaking extends itself spatially through social media like scenes and bohemias, providing forums where the desire for belonging as well as willful alterity are articulated together in multifarious fashion. In the case of musicmaking in Montreal, this tension has led to social, spatial and symbolic consequences that have in turn nourished the sociomusical experience in singularly unique kinds of ways. Montreal musicmaking exemplifies the manner in which a city can serve as a vehicle for the shaping of individual and group identity and collective representation, but perhaps more importantly, it demonstrates the ways in which these social and symbolic practices author one another in a manner that renders the search for causal determinations misplaced. Ultimately, this reveals how the city's semantic plenitude is circumscribed in such a way that it begins to impose certain

limits on the horizons of the sociomusical experience available to all musicmakers in Montreal.

This study of musicmaking took the image of the city as one of its organizing principles. I wanted to work through the similar views many of my respondents held of Montreal. They had variously described it as a “city with a palpable difference,” as “Paris between the Wars,” like Casablanca, like Brussels, or “like Canada reduced,” complete with its very own version of the nation’s “lower-expectation complex.” I wanted to consider this aggregation of signs in relation to musical activity, so I chose the current scene as a phenomenon which raised a number of issues. At the same time, I was interested as well in working through some of the theoretical and methodological quandaries that the study of informal social organizations in Montreal raise in terms of research as well as problems of categorization. Here I was situating my work in relation to the literature devoted to the sociology of cultural production (like that of Pierre Bourdieu, Howard Becker, Richard A. Peterson, Diane Crane and Janet Wolff). I chose two particular terms, “scene” and “bohemia,” as descriptive categories which might better account for the sociomusical experience found in Montreal. Why the notions of scene and bohemia over other available categories, such as art world or subculture? They are certainly not without their problems or limitations. And indeed art world and subcultures have been applied to the study of musicmaking in engaging ways (I cited Bernie Gendron’s and Paul Lopes’ work as examples which use the “art world” model). However, as I make clear in the dissertation, musicmaking has specific sociospatial effects that neither term can adequately address. Scene and bohemia offer better ways of conceptualizing musicmaking for a number of reasons. Broadly speaking, I read the

scene as a social medium structured by industries and institutions and bohemia as a kind of structure of feeling, an atmosphere, generating what Maffesoli calls a “communal ambience.” Bohemia, as a durable urban tradition implies an art of living, as Bourdieu claims, which led me to think more broadly about the semiotic and sociological significance of musicmaking in Montreal.

The density of signifying activity which takes place in a scene, as Barry Shanks has suggested, is difficult to parse out. That hasn't diminished the ubiquity of the term. Within the field of popular music studies, the concept of “scene” has, over the past decade, become one of the preferred tools for exploring musical cultures. The current use of the term gained much of its theoretical salience through its associations with studies of urban musical subcultures. The work of Andy Bennett on hip-hop in both the UK and Germany, Sara Cohen's work on indie rock in Liverpool, Barry Shank's study of rock in Austin, Texas, among others, has each taken up the category of “scene” as one which carries with it a semantic latitude that helps them re-evaluate some of the assumptions of subcultural theory. Bohemia, too, has enjoyed a certain vogue among academics, particularly in the recent work of Elizabeth Wilson, Dan Franck, Stephen Duncombe and David Brooks. Much of their writing is characterized by a tone of lament, emphasizing the disappearance of urban bohemias due to gentrification or mainstream co-optation. There is plenty of evidence to support these views, but bohemia still retains some of its theoretical utility, particularly in the case of musicmaking in Montreal.

In the study of musicmaking very little had been made of the role the city played in shaping the sociomusical experience. It seemed just to be a backdrop against which musical activity was set, not an active trope in musical production. I wanted to set the scene so to

speak as a social medium through which a particular experience of place unfolded, following from my respondents' own views of Montreal. Focusing my discussion on the notions of scene and bohemia and their social relation to the city of Montreal, this project was designed to respond to some of the theoretical problems and possibilities these terms raise.

In terms of qualitative research, I clarified my hesitations about ethnography, and in particular its use in so many studies of music scenes. This was not meant to be dismissive, but it can be said that ethnography often relies too heavily upon storytelling, the "evidence of experience" as one critic put it, at the expense of considering the broader forces and contextual variations which shape that experience. I wanted to avoid any tendencies towards reifying the subject or essentializing identity, a result put forward unproblematically by many ethnographic studies. My reservations about ethnography were rendered moot, in certain respects, by the necessities of the materialist framework and the use of other qualitative methods, such as meaning maps, interviews and surveys. Maps, for instance, still give us a subjective experience of musicmaking. However, they also begin to provide a set of spatial co-ordinates, a schematic cartography of social topographies, and a number of idiosyncratic perspectives on the city's built environment. All of these provide an occasion to consider the connection between routes and routines, understanding them to be shaped by a variety of factors which extend beyond ethnography's subjective scope. In the end, they can give us a wider frame of reference for considering identity production, group dynamics and collective representation in a specific context.

Used in concert, these frameworks can provide a thicker description of urban musicmaking. As an interpretative schema, this particular model can also tell us more about the cultural specificity of Montreal and can outline in greater detail the sociospatial

dimensions of the city's music scene. As part of this project, I have made references to the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly his notions of habitus and fields, the cognitive mapping of Kevin Lynch, the geography of affect found in the work of Yi-Fu Tuan, the materialist and discursive emphasis found in Rob Shields' term "social spatialization." Ruth Finnegan's study of musicmaking in Milton Keynes has also informed many of the key ideas here, in particular the stress she places on symbolic and material pathways as patterns which structure both biographies and the experience of place. I've also relied upon Charles Landry's notion of hard and soft infrastructures. I read these latter terms as crucial to understanding the material and symbolic dimensions of musicmaking, respectively. All of these ideas animated my own thinking, leading me to regard Montreal's cultural life as a complex phenomenon worthy of closer scrutiny.

By way of concluding, let me say something more about my chosen object of study, independent musicmaking in Montreal. There is nothing to suggest that this framework model's usefulness is restricted solely to independent music. It can be applied equally to the study of Montreal's hip-hop scene, electroclash, hardcore, idm, d'n'b, salsa, *musique actuelle*, klezmer or any musical genre found in the city. It can be extended to consider as well open-mic poetry, stamp-collecting, pottery-making, quilting or even flashmobbing. Each in their own way can be analyzed according to the experiential, materialist and discursive frameworks, and they each reveal something about the distinctive and special relationship to place and a community of others found in the city. However, musicmaking can offer us a distinctive set of practices through which a number of city-related issues reveal themselves.

Let me put this terms of a counter-example I just mentioned: chess-playing. I raise this because over the last few years, chess-playing has become an increasingly visible phenomenon in Montreal, sharing some of the qualities of a scene. Now chess-playing may in fact be read as symptomatic of the city's laissez-faire contentment, contributing in its way to the vision of Montreal as a city which tolerates the persistence of bohemian demands for living life at a leisurely pace. And although the presence of chess-playing may be an index of the city's easy-going attitude, it is also about a kind of retreat. It is less an engagement with the city and more a modest refusal, as chess-playing turns itself away from the city and looks inward. Even as a kind of scene, it strikes me as a conservative gesture that reacts to the anonymity and solitude of the city by reinforcing it through expression-less withdrawal. It is interiorized in a manner that resists actively engaging with the city. Musicmaking, by contrast, poses another kind of solution to the problem of the city and its paradoxes. Its response is much more self-conscious and proactive, founded as it upon an ethics of commitment, to both place and others. It feeds off of and into the drama of the city, the theatricality of the city as Lewis Mumford puts it. Musicmaking, in this sense, can tell us more compelling story about the organization of social and cultural life in a city, than say stamp collecting or chess-playing. As I've described it, musicmaking is a crucial binding agent, a set of practices, ideas, images, institutions and industries where identity production and solidarity exist as its twin trajectories. These can take the more existential form of community and/or the more symbolic shape of collective representation. In the case of representation, making music in Montreal is about engaging with the past, a history and tradition, which is tied to the economic and social rhythms of the city. Musicmaking here comes appended with its

own narratives and is freighted with its own mythologies which readily absorb the history of bohemia in Montreal. One hardly hears talk of the great chess-clubs of the past or the significance of Montreal's chess-playing traditions. No one is drawn to Montreal for its legendary chess scene.

Musicmaking is also, in important respects, about movement through the city, about travelling from house to rehearsal space, from club to bar, from café to recording studio. It revolves around reading the functionality of the city from an aesthetic perspective, pinpointing, integrating, and co-ordinating networks and music-related sites so that they best serve creative demands. The result is a dominant perception of the city-as-scene. Musicmaking in this sense is about the maintenance of a certain lifestyle which takes advantage of the city's symbolic and material resources and returns the favour by contributing to the cumulative textures of the city which in turn resonate with locals and non-locals alike. As a social medium, musicmaking in Montreal is made up of a density of communicative and social networks, formal and informal economies that create reticular circuits of reciprocity, webs of interconnectedness which rely upon and reinforce the hard and soft infrastructures of the city. But it is also about the relationships between francophones and anglophones and as such animates a variety of tensions which influences all levels of cultural production in the city. It is about "conflictual harmony" as Maffesoli might say, or "intimate alterity" as Augé would suggest. It leads to a productive *frisson* which generates a range of responses, as was made clear by many of my respondents.

On a different scale, it is about managing transience and instability as social facts of life in Montreal. In a related sense, it is about dealing with the contradictions and

paradoxes of eking out a creative existence within and against the contradictions and paradoxes of a commercial industry in a city marked by economic crisis. It may be about resistance at some level, but it is also very much about negotiation and compromise, about striking up alliances as a means of survival, about selling out and/or staying put.

My overarching concern regarding musicmaking in Montreal centres on an exploration of the singularity of a specific cultural phenomenon in the city, noting its multiple articulations. Through the words and actions of its participants, the many ways it represented and experienced reveals in telling ways how a city signifies its “cityness” in complex and varied forms. I’ve chosen musicmaking as one cultural practice which raises interesting questions regarding forms of sociality in the city, as musicmaking is made up of both material and symbolic dimensions, each of which has spatial consequences. It serves as a vehicle through which the meaningfulness of the city can be enunciated and can be one way in which affective attachments to place can be read as spatial extensions of sentiments and desires, both individual and collective. Musical practice introduces a number of issues of interest to communication scholars.

Circulation, movement, networks, social organization, politics, performance, identity and language are central aspects of musicmaking in the city. As such, this study offers an important contribution to the field of communications studies by utilizing a variety of research methods and concepts in order to bring together notions of the urban, the city and musicmaking, aspects of communication which are rarely, if ever, considered as interrelated phenomena.

NOTES

¹ Agamben, 1993: 10.

APPENDIX 1

Diaries

	Ian (Constellation Rec.)	Krista (Lederhosen Luci)	Lorraine (Kingpins)	Eric (Grenadine Rec.)
Sunday	home sick in bed	<p>Recovery day from an evening of "Roykstopp" (sp!?!@) at Club Soda the night before. (My friend Fred had free tickets so we rock out to the live drum and bass-y deliciousness and then go dancing in the (gay) village-my first time in a looooong time...-to predictable instrumental dancy mojo. We rock the floor regardless of mediocre tunes...)</p> <p>Spend the day eating brunch with friends (who happen to be musicians in the local scene and due to our conflicting tour schedules we never get to hang out) and attend the Parc Lafontaine Anti-War Peace Vigil. It's a windy evening.</p>	<p>Last night was a late night (doing sound at Jupiter Room for Celtic punk band "The Peelers.") I didn't get to sleep in today though because while most people I know were partying at the St-Paddy's day Parade, we'd called a rehearsal to prepare for our (Kingpins) first live show in almost 8 months! We always know that the rehearsals are going to be fun, and this one was no exception. Our sax player has been so busy with other projects he hadn't been at the last few rehearsals. Our new bass player is working out great, only a month into it and we're ready to go! The best part of it is that we're working on a couple of new tunes for the upcoming show...</p> <p>Arranging and working on form and such... I'm glad I wasn't working doing sound tonight, it will give me a chance to catch up on paying some bills... yuck... I also had time to update our website for the upcoming show. I got to play my new baritone sax today, it needs work, but it was fun! I can't afford anything much less a baritone saxophone right now, but at the price, I couldn't afford to let anyone else have it!!!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slept in and basically relaxed all day in my NDG apartment. We had a birthday party at my place for my label partner, Alex, the night before so if anything, we needed to recuperate. - Went to Astra Deli for breakfast with Alex and another friend. - In the evening, I realised there was some work to be done so I went to the Grenadine office (in a room in my apartment) to complete some info sheets on our next release (Belgium's Melon Galia) and make it regional specific for the US, Canada and Quebec. I had to do this Sunday night because our printer is down and I had to email the sheets to a friend so that they would be printed on Monday morning while I was at my new part-time job in the morning.
Monday	Sick	<p>Drive up to Ottawa with friend SFH (Synthetic Folk Hero) to play Zaphod's. There's a lovely bomb scare at the US Embassy and so when we arrive for the sound check the area is tapped off and a robot is checking out the "briefcase." Eventually we sneak in the back through the Dominion Tavern alley entrance and eventually the tape is down by 9pm and the St. Paddy's Day crew flood in for some music!</p>	<p>What a stressful day... Started out pretty good, delivering high-end sound gear from Solotech to a beautiful dance space in Montreal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Agora de Danse for an upcoming production (which, by the way, seems very interesting. The Mruta Merts ensemble...) <p>Anyway, after a quick late lunch I run to Fofounes where I'm working on monitors for the Daylo Abortions show. I was supposed to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went to my new part-time job (teaching English) in the morning and finished at 1pm. I went to Cheap Thrills to drop off some posters... Our US radio promoter was in Montreal but we couldn't get find a mutual time to meet together so he asked that I drop off the posters with Cheap Thrills instead. - Went home soon after and did everything that I could within a short

			<p>be training for FOH (Front of House) mixing, but re-scheduled to a better time with less distractions. Dayglo are infamous for their live shows and their reputation precedes them... They didn't make it on time for sound-check so we had some time to work out some of the bugs in the monitor system (definitely saved me from an even worse – more stressful - night...)</p> <p>The opening act (Video Dead) were nice and had a full sound check. They were very happy with the monitors and their set went off with only one minor glitch (the guitarist's monitor seemed to be crackling at times.) The FOH sound tech and I figured it was the kick drum line which has experienced problems in the past so we switched that input it for the Dayglo set. Their set started and I was unable to get any of the guitarist's vocals in his monitor... It took 4 songs to eliminate any possible problems with my set up (checked a different line on my console, checked the EQ patch and returns, etc.) Finally, as the guitarist continued yelling at me angrily for "some fucking monitors" I weaved my way through a packed house to tell the FOH sound tech that I will re-patch that vocal mic to another strip in the snake. This finally solved the problem – including the crackling problem from earlier by the way (but it took another song just to get back through the crowd to my console.) At the same time, the drummer kept losing his kick drum in his monitor, and again, it took a few songs to realize that the mic itself kept creeping away from the drum and back, getting knocked around!!! We had to keep our eyes on it for the rest of the show... Finally, the technical things worked out, but it took what seemed forever and was NOT very relaxing...</p>	<p>time-span.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Left the house at 2:45 to run errands at the Post Office in Westmount (mailings), Jean-Coutu in NDG/edge of Westmount (to get packaging tape and construction board-paper), and the Photocopy shop on the corner of Prudhomme and Sherbrooke in NDG (to make some bios of Melon Galia). - Went back home and left again to go to teach a class. - Got back home at 7pm. - Ate and left for band practice (I play drums in a new local band called Biffy Perdu) near Georges-Vanier Metro station. - Got back home at 10:30pm and went to bed.
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			<p>Fortunately, the opening act thanked me again after the show for the great monitors, and the guys in Dayglo apologized... Actually the drummer ("Bonehead") and I had a good laugh once we both realized it was the mic and not ME that was screwing up his monitor mix! Anyway, as happens occasionally, I learned a lot from this night, and might be able to react quicker next time... It never gets "boring" for too long that's for sure! Though excitement like this I can live without!</p>	
Tuesday	<p>walked to constellation following my usual route: 157 villeneuve to esplanade north to laurier east to clark north to fairmount east to st. laurent north to 5369 st. laurent</p> <p>sat in front of constellation terminal 2 and caught up on missed day of work. answered innumerable e-mails re: demo policy, godspeed/hangedup tour dates, distribution minutiae</p> <p>made packaging mock-up for upcoming cst027 (mt. zion) record</p> <p>evening: worked on audio mastering of cst027 with harris newman at his home studio on marconi street</p>	Drive back to Montreal in the morning.	<p>Today, I spent a lot of time investigating a seller on E-Bay. My partner is looking for a recording system and has won 3 auctions so far that I have investigated and uncovered as being from fraudulent users who hijack e-bay accounts. The first two were easy to uncover, it took me only a day, but this third one was a lot more complicated as I got less help from other e-bay users, and the E-bay support took almost 3 days to get back to me and confirm that the listing was fake! Late tonight they confirmed that my suspicions were right... Good thing I am unrelentingly suspicious of deals that are "too good to be true" and smart enough to figure out how to investigate them! It's terrible to think that all we want to do is set up a nice little recording studio, and we could lose our livelihood in just a few hours by sending money to someone who is defrauding us... Anyway... There was a show exceptionally tonight at the Jupiter Room. It's rare that shows are on days other than Saturday or Sunday or even the occasional Wednesday. There were 3 interesting acts tonight with differing set ups. I did sound for the first two acts and was very happy with my mix. The third band's engineer did</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went to work again and came back home at 1:30pm. - Worked in my home office until 10pm or so. - Left the house to go to the Post Office in Westmount (mailings)

			<p>sound for them, but the guitarist had turned his amp up so loud that it was hard to make a perfect mix. Still, it was a good show as they turned all the lights off and just had a projection going thereby making the music more in your face and ambient (though loud.) I think the change in season is altering the acoustics of the clubs I'm working at, it's time to re-EQ each place...</p>	
Wednesday	<p>packed godspeed american tour stock (2nd leg) and u.s. distro stock order; completed customs paper work; bemoaned the beginning of the war and read about it on cursor.org</p> <p>evening: saw film ('adaptation') and then worked with harris again on cst027 master</p>	<p>My friend offers me a ticket to see Henry Rollins speak but I'm too exhausted from work/french classes to go!</p>	<p>Today was a productive day! I shuffled a bunch of money around from one credit card to the other to pay less interest (these 18% rates are killing me! It's almost impossible to get ahead...) I burned a bunch of mini-CD's and made the little sleeve for the "Distroboto" at Casa Del Popolo (an AWESOME idea to promote local talent... I am putting a 3-song mini-CD into it from my side-project with Krista (aka Lederhosen Lucil.) People will insert a toonie into a cigarette machine which now dispenses Culture instead of Cancer (heh heh.. sorry for the jab... I'm an ex-smoker!) In return for their contribution, they will get something cool, in case they choose the "Gelée" button, they will get our CD, but otherwise there are lots of other cool items in the Distroboto such as local comic art, photos, poems, etc.! Someone should write an article about that very unusual and original marketing concept!!! I also went to CKUT (McGill University radio) to make the spot for our (Kingpins) upcoming all ages show at L'X. I think it turned out pretty good considering I walked in with no script. Tonight there was another show at Jupiter for which I did sound. It was a fun night with two acoustic acts. There was lots of drinking and a big jam session at the end! It was a good night with a nice atmosphere.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went to work again and came back home at 1:30pm. - Worked for two hours on the label and then went to the Post Office in Westmount (more mailings) - Left to teach a class and came back home at 7pm. - Ate and left again to play floor hockey that includes a bunch of people that play in the music industry - near Charlevoix metro - Got home at 10:30pm and went to bed.

Thursday	<p>packaging day at work: glued photos to backcatalogue LP jackets, stuffed and boxed various titles, answered sporadic phone calls about upcoming godspeed shows and talked to various suppliers re: printing quotes for cst027</p>	<p>Tonight is an insane music night in Montreal – Calexico (friend Julie - plays with Bob Wiseman, Fembots - is invited up from To with them to play and puts me on the list), play Petit Campus (John invites me to go to this as well!) & Martha Wainwright is playing at 7:30pm at a CBC session and friend Sara from work invites me. Needless to say, with all these amazing things going on I finish french at 10:00pm and make my way home for a quiet night. Damn! It's either nothing for weeks or 3 great shows a night!!!</p>	<p>My first night off in a while... Took it easy today (stayed up late anyway though!) More financial stuff... This week the debt is getting to me, but I know that I have WAY more days where I am in the "it's only money" mode... Thank goodness for that! Still, I'm going to get a copy of my credit report just to see where creditors think I stand! Made some plans to go poster for the show soon (this is a very DIY show, I even designed the poster, flyers and tickets which I hand-perforated!!!!) and need to drop off some promo material to CKUT but also to L'X where the show is taking place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went to work again and then went to CKUT Radio McGill to pick up some used bubble packages (we like to re-use packages for both savings and environmental reasons). Spoke to Steve the music director briefly and then left. - Came back home and worked on the label and went to the Post Office in Westmount before 5pm to finish our day's mailouts. - At this point, it's all a haze because I crashed on the couch for a few hours after moving non-stop since Sunday. - I worked again on the label in the evening and went to bed around 10pm.
Friday	<p>drove to champlain NY for shipping of us distro stock order (one big pallet) - everything took a bit longer due to extra security</p> <p>answered interview questions for UQAM student researching independence, globalisation and the record industry</p> <p>evening: saw film ('matthew barney's cremaster cycle' - documentary at FIFA); ate at sala rossa; went to elizabeth anka/hrsta show at casa</p>	<p>Dr Mike from Snailhouse/Wooden Stars fame is the first act of the evening – he's a multi-talented Montreal-based musician. ive up to Toronto from Montreal at 1pm. Open for Toronto band "Fembots".</p>	<p>Today was spent at the bank to take concrete steps for my money juggling and making all my crazy calculations! Tonight I worked at Founounes on the Terrace/Garage side doing sound for two acts. Bloodshot Bill sounded great. As for the headlining act, I had a lot of trouble getting the vocals over the band at sound-check. The drummer plays quite loudly (on a beautiful kit though...) and the guitars are hard to EQ nicely into the mix. It didn't help that the singer cupped the microphone often causing feedback in the monitors as well as FOH and making him sound like he was coming through an AM radio (I understand why people do it, but maybe someday they'll invent a microphone suited to that particular "mic technique" – except for now, they haven't...) Even when we did bring the vocals up, all it did was accentuate all that cymbal, snare and crunchy guitar sound that was bouncing around on stage. The guys are really nice and I did the best I could under the circumstances. By the end of the set, myself,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Woke up at 8am and started working on the label. - Stayed in the home office all day except to go to the Post Office in Westmount a little before 5pm. - Worked in the early evening and opted to play video games instead of seeing a concert at Casa. Lame I know, but I was tired.

			<p>and the engineer who had recorded and mixed their studio album, got it sounding better than at the start, but not as good as I would have liked. It doesn't make me feel better that everyone of their friends (and they) tell me that they can NEVER get the vocals loud enough in any venue... It is cold comfort and still rather demoralizing as a sound person not to be able to get a band to sound good. A fellow engineer asked me two weeks ago "What's it like being the (practically the) only female sound tech in Montreal?" To be honest, I do love it, but on nights like tonight I wonder if I'm cut out for it (luckily, I know that most if not all sound-techs feel this way from time to time!) I think my ears just need a bit of a break!</p> <p>I have learned so much about how to make my own band sound good BEFORE we hit the stage and now understand why it's so important. I know (almost) every aspect about being in a band and being on the other side (not only tech-wise, but production-wise and management-wise.)</p> <p>These are the many things I bring to my little music world! Bands are always very happy to work with me (because I know what it's like to have a mean sound-guy) and sound techs are always happy to work with me (because I know how it is to do sound for a mean band...) I guess I'm lucky in that sense!</p> <p>Anyway... This week I've also been trying to figure out whether or not we can tour the States in July (trying to figure out logistics and feasibility...) I really want to tour the States rather than just driving out to BC and touring cross-Canada only on the way back or playing out there and back (with the huge distances between cities and the gas prices going nuts, it's quite a risk.) I also have to hammer out the logistics for the tour I</p>	
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			will be doing with Nicotine (punk band from Japan) in May. I will be "tour managing" and driving them for their 3-week Canadian tour with Death By Stereo and Downway this May... My partner (also a sound tech and musician) said to me tonight "You have a trade." Humph... never thought of it that way... Pretty cool!	
Saturday	went to peace march; late lunch and coffee at pharmacia esperanza on st. laurent at st. viateur; back to bed to nurse recurring flu	Drive back from Toronto gig. Pass out from exhaustion.	Today I didn't do very much. I'm often tired and have a hard time recuperating because there's always something to do or organize or worry about. There was a show tonight at the Jupiter Room. The bands were really friendly but I had a bit of a hard time with some of the sounds. Overall though the night was fun and everyone left happy! I went for a drink after the show to Biftek St-Laurent (where I often end up running into people I don't see much!)	- Woke up at 8am and started working on the label around 9:30. - Stayed home to work in the home office until 5pm and went to a dinner party organized by two friends.
Sunday	cst027 mastering; shameless oscar awards viewing; long & silly debate about relative merits of michael moore speech	Get up at a decent hour and grab some amazing brunch at Sala Rossa. Had been invited to play at the Kick Boxing Demo tonight but thought I'd be tied up in Toronto/London. Instead ended up back in Montreal and working at Galafilm until 9:00pm after brunch. There were bands, DJs and the full boxing ring was set up for demos. Local music writer t'Cha Dunlevy was amongst the kick boxing contingent! Wish I'd been awake enough after working to have attended...	We had another great rehearsal today for the show. Tonight is the last night of this diary and I don't really have anything exciting to write about!!!! Hahahaha...	

	Greg (Paper Tiger)	Tim (Parka 3)	Eleni (Paper Tiger)	Stephen (Blainerunner)
Sunday	went to see parka three at saphir for a benefit show for mcgill's free vegan lunch service. finally saw some mcgill jam bands. parka three was awesome. they played a new song which sounds like springsteen.	today i did work for a while before i met up with the other guys in parka three to practice. today the parka three played at saphir, a club that sets up goth nights twice a week. It was a benefit for "the midnight kitchen" a group at mcgill that gives out free vegan lunch twice a week. They are trying to	I went to see Parka 3, play a benefit show for the Midnight Kitchen at Saphire, which use to be called Purple Haze a few years ago and I specifically recall playing there with my old ska band. It looks the same except for the gothic looking light fixtures. Dirty, no windows, almost scares me	Blainerunner practice day. I listen to the Nation of Ulysses' "13 point program to destroy America" on the walkman, hoofing it all the way down Parc, through the McGill ghetto and into the creeping mess of downtown; it feels good to be outside. I meet Beaver and Colin at

		<p>make it so they can do it everyday. It was pretty fun. We practiced for a little while before the show and then went there at seven to soundcheck but they were taking a really long time so we went back to my place and watched The Simpsons. We played second out of three bands and it seemed like people had fun.</p>	<p>because it reminds me of that Rhode Island club that burnt to the ground. The first band that played was 90% cover band, playing good ol' nineties hits like Rage Against the Machine and even a new hit from the Hives, I really hated it, because they played for almost an hour and it was a total guitar wanking fest, one of the guys only soloed for the whole set... no spirit in it whatsoever, it was like they were jamming for us. I was glad they were over. When the Parka 3 came on, most of the crowd was inebriated enough to really get into the band's sense of humor. Kids were hooting, hollering, dancing, clapping extremely loud, so all in all it was a successful set. I left as the third band started playing since I was pretty tired and had to get up early the next day</p>	<p>around 9:30pm in what we call the Blaine Horton's. The rehearsal space is in the dank basement of an office building at the corner of Rene-Levesque and St. Alexandre. There is a design firm called "Fugazi" upstairs. Every week we try to peel the sticker bearing their name off the buzzer. Every week our East Coast Conscience gets the best of us and we leave it curling.</p> <p>Practice proceeds relatively smoothly. My new song about my sister's terrible job in rural Newfoundland starts to really cook. "Clareville"!</p> <p>I walk back up Parc at around 1:30am. "There's only one rule in this town, and if you don't know by now..."</p>
Monday	<p>my band paper tiger recorded two new songs at our friends apartment. he has a pretty nice home studio setup so they sound pretty good. one is for a compilation that we're going to be on coming out this summer.</p>	<p>today after class i did a little work and then worked on making cdrs. i finished making a bunch of cdr's for the show that my roommate greg set up. We have a small cdr label and we burn the cdr's ourselves, photocopy the artwork and then put together the inserts. So we made a few of these - five for each band - even though we like to have more for the band who is playing and big game hunting is playing tomorrow. They are re-recording their stuff though so they only wanted a few - plus, things are really hectic with school so it's kind of tough to make a lot right now.</p>	<p>Went to school, nothing out of the ordinary in that. Then got the band mates together(paper tiger) and we set off to our friend Kevin's apartment in Verdun to record two or more songs. We recorded a new song and re-recorded an old one, just to see what better equipment would make us sound like. And wow I was amazed at how professional and smooth we sounded. Our friend souped us up so much, we sounded like a makeout ballad. It was stressful, but then when is recording NOT. But we did it and plan to return to mix the tracks and record some more, before we set out on tour in May.</p> <p>March 18th: Just when you thought that was enough music for a week, this time around I went to my band mate Greg's show(which he organized) and got to see my friend's band Big Game Hunting, as well as a band from New York by the name of Paris Grey and Les Angles Morts. I loved all of the bands, but mostly my friends, just because</p>	<p>Some days one stays indoors and listens to Elvis Costello.</p>

			<p>its such sweet sweet sounding music and I know I might be a little biased but they definitely shine through without professionalism and just authentic musical glow. The other two bands were definitely more pro sounding. Les Angles Morts had an awesome video of a skier falling and fallin, which went extremely well with the music. I hate to be a negative nancy but it definitely was reminiscent of Godspeed, and as much as I like those guys I think Montreal and especially this city has heard too many bands trying to imitate that sound. But that's just for originality. I think they have awesome musical skills, and have a great ambient feeling about them. They're also relatively new and I can see them finding their own niche somewheres in between this nebula of music actuelle and something a bit more of their own.</p>	
Tuesday	<p>practiced with my other band that i sing and play bass in from 2 to 4 in the afternoon. we havent played any shows yet but hopefully soon. we also dont have a name yet. met up with this band paris grey from nyc at 6 who were playing on a show i put on that night at the jupiter room. big game hunting and les angles morts also played. it went really well...about 55 kids showed which was awesome for a tuesday and i was able to pay the venue and the bands.</p>	<p>today i went to the show at The Jupiter Room that greg set up. Big Game Hunting was awesome. A band from new york city played and they were pretty good indie rock stuff and then Les Angles Mort played and did their instrumental thing but i left early in hopes of doing homework, which didn't happen because i still got home super late. We took a really funny picture of a friend ordering a drink at the bar with his butt sticking out of his pants. any way, big game hunting sounded the best i have heard them yet. I sold a few cdr's on a sliding scale of 1-5 dollars - so people can pay whatever they want. I also sold a couple of copies of some cdr's that i was distro'ing for a cool guy from Detroit who does a label called Asaurus Records.</p>	<p>Today was the only day where I didn't go to a show, or practice with my band. I did listen to The Sea and Cake's OUI album as well as download some Japanese Group Sounds from soulseek. I found mp3's to the movie Tokyo Drifter as well and listened to the theme song approximately 20 times. I know I'm obsessed but I'm writing a paper on it, so the more I get into this the better. Today was dedicated to school work exclusively. Finding out about the war was incredibly depressing for me, and after that I couldn't really concentrate on work, so I tuned into CKUT for awhile and fell asleep.</p>	<p>I work reshelving books at the library. It is awesome. Today I am assigned the fifth floor and sneak into a secluded carrel to read William T. Vollman fragments. Later in the day I program some beats for Blaine at home on the computertron.</p>

<p>Wednesday</p>	<p>sent paris grey off that morning.</p>	<p>Today i got another song in the mail for the compilation i have been working on. It came from a one man band called "The Escargo-go's" from Pennsylvania. He send me a cdr with a song he did for the compilation, plus another one of his songs, and two songs from his other band - "The Snow Faeries" - who were also awesome. I then had Greg - my roommate - put the song onto his computer as a .wav file - this way i can burn the cd when it's finished from his computer - and all the songs will be .wav files. This made my day, as i'm supposed to be recieving a bunch of songs this month and i'm still waiting for a bunch.</p>	<p>After school me and a friend joined the Vigil in front of the Roddick gates then followed a group of peace demonstrators down to Rene-Levesque. It felt good inside to be there and seeing all these other people (mostly younger people) made me feel something beyond defeatism. Band practice happened today! Brian showed up uber uber late. But me and greg forgive him as always. We even came up with a new song. Greg, used his Dr Rhythm beat box to play this digital bass and it sounds like a dance music song right out of the eighties. I was kinda frustrated with myself, because I couldn't come up with a really good keyboard line for the song. But I'll keep trying. We practiced our set for the show on Sunday, and I'm feelin a bit nervous and excited, especially since a lot of our friends and acquaintances said they would come.</p>	<p>More reshelving [sadly, the sixth floor: philosophy, religious studies, library sceince]. Then the weekly tennis trouncing at the hands of Colin "Bjorn" Snowsell. He's lanky. We drink beer and eat bad hamburgers afterwards while discussing the relative propriety of his Morrissey shirt to the drinking/burger venue. I pass out on the couch at 7pm while watching 50 Cent videos on Muchmusic.</p>
<p>Thursday</p>	<p>paper tiger practice. we got a set together for our show on sunday and wrote a new song on which i play the bass synthesizer on my drum machine. eleni says it sounds like sir mix a lot.</p>	<p>Today I got another cd in the mail for the compilation! this one was from Aurora Seven Records and it had a song from "Melemine" and a song from "Awesome Animal Ambulance" - both songs were awesome. My friend who is going to play trumpet in a new band that i am starting came over today. We haven't had practice yet but we were hoping that we could. It turned out that Greg was recording with Paper Tiger today so he didn't get back untill after she had left. But when she was there we talked about the band and listened to some music. Another friend also stopped by and said that we should change our potential name from "Miami, Hawaii" or "The Miamis" to "Miami Advice" - we agreed, and we think the name will fit the pure pop music we want to make.</p>	<p>After school me and a friend joined the Vigil in front of the Roddick gates then followed a group of peace demonstrators down to Rene-Levesque. It felt good inside to be there and seeing all these other people (mostly younger people) made me feel something beyond defeatism. Band practice happened today! Brian showed up uber uber late. But me and greg forgive him as always. We even came up with a new song. Greg, used his Dr Rhythm beat box to play this digital bass and it sounds like a dance music song right out of the eighties. I was kinda frustrated with myself, because I couldn't come up with a really good keyboard line for the song. But I'll keep trying. We practiced our set for the show on Sunday, and I'm feelin a bit nervous and excited, especially since a lot of our friends and acquaintances said they would come.</p>	<p>I am a Library of Congress master. I can find the obscure "NX" section. I catch myself loudly singing Mark Bragg songs in the stacks. Nobody notices. I walk home to nap before Blaine.</p> <p>It's pouring rain. I slip on the ice at the bottom of my stairs and fall into a puddle. The bass headstock takes a thwack and I rip my new pants. I am wet and muddy but I haul ass to the busstop anyhow. Practice is a bit of a write-off. Beaver's new job prevents him from attending, so Colin and I drink 40s and blast through Eric's Trip covers. Later we have "Yo La Tengo" jams with the reverb cranked. In search of more beer we head to the frigging Copacabana and marvel at the jarring disjuncture between the atmosphere and the war footage on the ceiling-mounted TVs. They are alternating between the newest Elvis Costello record and</p>

				Modest Mouse's "This is a long drive for someone with nothing to think about". It's a long walk home for someone with muddy ripped pants and a jacket that isn't waterproof.
Friday	went to a party that the drummer of les angles morts was having. arcade fire played one of their songs and then covers of sweet child of mine and louie louie. pretty amazing. les angles morts also did a covers only set with songs by janet jackson, mary j blige and weezer. earlier that night a friend played me the new st catherines record which they just finished recording. that band is so good...i cant wait until it comes out.	Today i slept through my first class because my alarm was acting wierd - or because i did something wierd to it. Then i went to class, tried to read inbetween classes and didn't get anything done and went to my next class - which turned out to be cancelled. so i went to buy a book, but they didn't have it - so i check at the used books and music store near school but they didn't have it either, so i spent some time looking through the overpriced \$5 bin and found nothing worth five dollars. Then i went home and went out to eat. My friends talked me into going to a party at some guys house and it was pretty bad. There were drunk dudes playing instruments and artsy kids so i didn't stay too long. There were some nice kids there too, but i didn't get a chance to talk to them because i saw them as i was leaving and the first band did play an awesome Arcade Fire song - because it was everyone in Arcade Fire minus one original member and plus someone else i think.	The weekend finally arrived and not a moment too soon. Once again I found myself going to a show (technically speaking) our friend Olivia was having a housewarming and birthday party for a friend and so a bunch of my friends all went up to Mile End to take a peak at the madness and excitement. I've been a non-drinker and non-smoker for quite sometime (well straight edge but I feel odd using that term) and going to parties where everyone is drinking makes me a little awkward not because I look down on them , but because I feel somewhat excluded, not that I expect people to accommodate for me, and not because I really want to drink. Its just this weird feeling(I didn't feel like I was myself when I was drinking), and that's pretty much why I stopped drinking a few years ago. I still had fun though, everyone was being really friendly, and a lot of familiar faces from shows, people nodding, hugging each other dancing, singing. Members from Arcade Fire and Les Angles Morts played some songs and did some great covers with the birthday boy singing along. Classics no one ever forgets such as Louie Louie and Sweet Child of Mine. As well as a live karaoke version of a Janet Jackson song with the music video on the Tv screen behind the drum set. I left with some of my friends and went back to their apartment and played an online game by the name of Text Twist, its highly addictive.	I watch war coverage on CNN and do thesis work at home. I listen to the copy of Xiu Xiu's "A Promise" that I borrowed from Beaver [it's a bit over the top, but suits the mood of the day]. The plan to stay in all night gets thwarted when Raso and Logan invite me to watch "8 Mile" and eat perogies with them. I tell them that despite liking neither Eminem nor cheese, I will attend. It's fun. Afterwards Raso and I march from Logan's artschool-Plateau apartment to the loft party of the Arcade Fire, local it-boys [corner of St. Laurent/Bernard]. She was the one with the invite. I run into a gang of familiar faces, including Eric from Kiss Me Deadly who is sporting a DC-hardcore-style shaved-head. We joke about his drunk ass being straight-edge. We sing a few choruses of "Out of step" on the sidewalk. The party is amusing in its smarminess. I swear I overhear someone quipping: "every indie-rock anglo hipster in town must be here..." This is partly true: there probably isn't a single face I don't recognize from show-going. People generally seem to know each other. Everybody speaks English. Everybody is about 22. Everybody is oh-so-fashion-correct. See you at Casa, dude. The temporary self-loathing gets curbed by the appearance of Michelle From Work, the friend that Colin Blainerunner is almost doing some setting-me-of-the-up with. Nice! A phone number on a bus transfer, how stupidly appropriate. I end up walking home with Carlo

				Who Plays the Singing Saw. We talk about the West Island kids who have made the montrealshows.com messageboard even more insufferable.
Saturday	went to see yesterday's ring play an instore show at stomp records. theyre an acoustic side project of some guys from the st catherines. those guys rule and every song has a line about drinking which is hilarious. plus shows in record stores are awesome because you can shop for records after the shows over.	Today i went to the anti-war protest. It was pretty good - but we missed the march part, so it didn't seem as "exciting" - but it was awesome to see so many out showing their discontent with what is going on. After this we went to Stomp Records to see Yesterday's Ring play in the store. There were some "punk rock" guys and girls there, some skaters, etc. and it was pretty packed. It was pretty cool - they play acoustic stuff with really gruff vocals - stuff that would be all the rage with the bike punks. Everyone there seemed pretty relaxed and seemed like they were having a good time and i hung out with my friend Frank. Then i bought this awesome seven inch called "Beet The Meatles" - and it was three california pop-punk bands doing beatles covers. Then we went to check out an apartment and there was a stupid "finders fee" so we walked all the way back to our place (from guy-concordia to st.dominique and sherbrooke) and then walked to a potluck at st. denis and mount royale - picking up a pie on the way. It was awesome - we met some cool girls - a couple of them are in my "women and work" sociology class and they were all really funny. Then we through brocolli at people on st. denis from the third story window. My roommate wanted to go home at midnigh or so - but somehow i talked him into staying till three - because after everyone left we had a two hour scrabble game, which i lost.	Today was the bigger peace protest and a group pf my friend got together and we walked down to the consulate. Things were so grandiose, I was definitely in "awe" to see the turn out. Young and old. Grand parents, dogs, etc. Some of the posters were extremely thought provoking others were immature and inappropriate. But all in all it was beyond what I ever imagined. I wish this solidarity could be translated into real action in Iraq and in the UN and the US gov't. After the protest we all went up to the Stomp Records store, where our friend's band Yesterday's Ring(acoustic folk punk?) was playing. This show was almost entirely comprised of francophone people. In fact my small group of friends were the only ones that were Anglophone. Its kinda sad not to see more kids from the English speaking music scene there because they do sing English songs as well and I know that they would like their songs. They're authentic, honest, heart felt, personal and political at the same time, almost a more modern punk version of Billy Bragg. When I left there I felt really good inside, like I spent an evening far from strangers, with sincere good people.	No blood for oil? I march in the rain with some school kids [Wurster, Kirstie/Tim, others] and voice a little dissent. We all agree that the protest organizers have to pick a new route and stop making every rally so damned maudlin. They play "Fortunate Son" on the big speakers; it's better than another 15 rounds of "Give Peace a Chance", but it's no "White Riot". I split early, eat a sandwich and brood. Colin drops by in the evening and we watch the video of our show at Le Swimming. It's not nearly as bad as I remembered, but it becomes very clear that almost no one was paying attention [the chatter is almost as loud as the music]. We talk about our performance plans, fantasize about touring out west and staying there, and disagree at length about current events. I reread a bunch of John Darnielle's Last Plane to Jakarta zine online and giggle late into the night.

<p>Sunday</p>	<p>paper tiger played at the balafré with sadie hawkins and the burdocks. between 40 and 50 kids were there. both of the other bands were so good and really nice too. the sound was really good and clear there which is new for us plus we even got paid a little too. definitely one of the best times we've ever played.</p>	<p>Today I went to my friend Melissa's hockey game - championship game to be exact. They lost, but it was an alright game. Then i did school work and listened to chom 97.7 for a long time - the best station in montreal. The other people in Paper Tiger - including my girlfriend - came over and ate dinner and then left for the show to do soundcheck. I'm going to meet them there in a little while. it's at Belefré.</p>	<p>slept in, wrote a paper for my japanese film class. then went into the city to do a Paper Tiger show at this small bar called Le Balafré. Things looked great, nice cozy. Then the waitress came up to my friends and I and asked us in french if we wanted a drink. Since I was the only one who understood and spoke french I told her no and that since I was performing I shouldnt have to buy a drink. Then she proceeded by saying to me in french that in order for my friends to stay in the club they would have to all order one drink minimum during the evening. I was pretty angry at this (especially since i had no money for a 4\$ coke). Then I explained to my friends what she said and we spent 5 minutes arguing over such unfair business. In the end the place was too busy for her to keep tabs of who drank and who didnt. 2 other bands played: The Burdocks from Halifax and Sadie Hawkins(who have been on a hiatus for the past 2 years). The Sadie Hawkins came back without the Get Up Kids keyboard pop sound and with a more technical math indie rock style, which mimicked certain elements of braid and the halifax sound as well. Sometimes they reminded me of Thrush Hermit other times it sounded like they wanted to sound like Rush and Zeppelin... interesting... this would of been better if that hadnt played for an hour. But I was impressed. Our set was better than other times, especially since we were able to hear each other better, due to the better sound equipment at the place. The Burdocks followed in the same vein as the Sadie Hawkins , but slightly diff. I couldnt really pin point exactly what it sounded like but the vocals were more cacophonous less</p>	
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			<p>melodic than the other band that played. Both both bands had the indie rock guitarist moves down pact. Good stage presence and no egos... at the end of the evening, all the bands went around congratulating one another , and it felt good to be in such company. I never liked bands that stayed in their own corner and left without even acknowledging that they had played with you. This was definitely the ideal, band to band contact. So me and greg left the show feeling mighty good about the evening and the weather.</p>	
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