Crossfading from Hierarchy to Heterotopia: The Political Power of Subversive Discourses within American Music Festivals

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Abstract:

Using the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault and Josh Kun to theorize the space of a music festival, this paper investigates the ways in which the large-scale American music festival, as a unique audio-heterotopian space, provides discourse and cultural critique aimed to deconstruct notions of bro-culture and white privilege. Within the music festival culture, there are groups of critical bloggers and cultural critics who regularly speak out against an encroaching "bro-ism" amongst festival goers Their critique after the festivals aims to re-configure the discourse around behavior and what is wearable and sayable within the festival. In many circumstances, their discourse deconstructs white privilege and realigns notions of cool, as well as effects policy change and contributing to alternate models of the music festival experience. This paper is largely aimed to help reimagine the mainstream music festival as a powerful site that helps to reconfigure dominant ideology and ways of discussing issues of privilege.

Keywords:
Heterotopia, Audiotopia, Discourse, Refraction, Bro-Culture, White Privilege

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Introduction:

The Official Lollapalooza 2014 Sunday Recap video opens with a small child, camera eye level with him, dancing in the grass among adults who are clapping and smiling down toward him, cut between masses dancing and back to the child blowing bubbles (Lollapalooza). Perhaps the language and debate formed around festivals is popular due to the fascination with sociologically observing and commenting upon masses in 'id-bliss.' But what is occurring within the music festival among patrons is not only reversion to childhood as sold in the video (whether to the womb, away from normative behavior, or to a sense of the 'the real' (to borrow Lacanian terminology,) but the overall experience contributes to a process of cultural formation and contestation. In addition to the deviation and debauchery that can occur within the festival, discourse aimed at dominant culture and ideology manifests itself in the form of critique of what people will see, hear and experience at the festival.

The space of the music festival will be theorized as a combination of Michel Foucault's idea of heterotopia and Josh Kun's idea of audiotopia. Heterotopias are physical realizations of utopian spaces that are "counter-sites" within culture, where culture is "simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (Foucault). These spaces hold a mirror to culture. Large-scale American music festivals are partly modern day heterotopias because they not only mirror culture, but lead to discourse that refracts culture, which is the act of changing or distorting an image through a specific medium. Blogs that engage in criticism over bro culture represent, contest, and invert dominant culture. This provides a new discourse over how to perceive such a culture that enacts privilege over others. Music festivals are also a physical realization of what

Josh Kun calls "audiotopia," where popular music provides an aural utopian space for the listener to make new understandings of the social world. Music festivals hold both the physical realization of an aural "audiotopia," and the mirroring counter-culture qualities of Foucault's heterotopia, thus providing the space of what I will call an audio-heterotopia.

From the audio-heterotopia's ability to mirror and make new social meanings comes cultural critique from numerous internet blogs and blog writers benefiting from this unique space. Their post-festival discourse reconfigures and refracts notions pertaining to a dominant privilege of bro-culture seen rising in popularity and prevalence at the music festival. Many blogs contest this dominant form of culture through satire which aims to deconstruct the power and perception of bro-culture, using humor, first-hand observations and photos of people at music festivals to try and denounce how bro-culture and white-privilege are seen as "cool." The post-festival discourse uses a process of refraction, which distorts an image and then entering the point of their critique (bro-culture) through a prism so as to separate aspects that require attention. This humor and discourse holds a deconstructive power, where through language, writers are able to invert the binary power structure and reclaim power away from hegemonic culture. Throughout this paper I will chart how the discourse arising from music festivals is three-fold. The first level of discourse is the immediate response by festivalgoers, gatekeepers and bloggers after the festival. The second order of discourse is able to break beyond the blog community and festival-going culture to include larger mainstream media outlets that may not publish in the form of blog satire, but will report on what they view as larger social and political issues at the music festival. The third level of discourse will focus on specific cultural effects of the discourse that result in festival policy change over what is wearable (Native American headdresses) at a festival and trends in the *type* of music festival one can attend.

The power of this discourse is then heard in regard to altering festival policy in some instances; where festivals are beginning to ban attire that includes cultural appropriation and where "transformational festivals" which include educational workshops and lectures are becoming increasingly popular as alternate festival models outside of the mainstream large-scale American music festival. [1]

Section 1: Discourse, Space & Time: Music Festivals as Audio-Heterotopia

In 1967 Michel Foucault wrote, "We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed" (Foucault). Since that period, the world is even more in an era of juxtaposition, where more voices have the ability to be heard but a few still hold a privileged position in relation to all those scrambling for attention. The world of juxtaposition is a world in which conformity and anarchy can coexist in a single space, where hegemonic ideology runs its course amongst radicals, rebels and game-changers. Let us keep this idea of simultaneity in mind, as we theorize about how the 'space' of the large-scale American music festival produces a unique and specific discourse over sociopolitical issues.

The large-scale American music festival space can be read as addressing many simultaneous notions regarding utopia and heterotopia, as well as the idea of time in its archival and spontaneous nature; the music festival takes place for one or two weekend but will be archived forever thereafter online and in reactions, reviews, and recaps. The music festival's

[1] When speaking of large-scale American music festivals I am referring to the model of Coachella, Lollapalooza, etc. These festivals exist just outside or near major cities and are destination points that attract a large international audience.

recent surge in popularity across North America[2] and the world over has been the subject of much academic research, but none focusing specifically on how the audio-heterotopian space lends itself to a specific form of discourse that is highly unique. Traditional concerts have always been a convergence of subculture and style, but the new breed of festivals introduce a new kind of cultural and sociological phenomenon in that they present a panoply of interfacing cultures. A specific side effect of this new festival space is unique cultural and ideology shifting discourse and criticism.

Before theorizing the space of the festival in more depth, it is imperative to clearly define the terms I will be using and how I will be using them. Foucault's meaning of the term 'discourse' surrounds discourses of understanding. In this sense, discourse is

> a group of statements which provide a language for talking about - a way of representing the knowledge about - a particular topic at a particular historic moment. … Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language, … [but it is] not purely a 'linguistic concept. It is about language and practice [and] how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others (Hall 44).

In regards to Foucault's definition, discourse is what builds meaning around a specific subject. It is not a singular statement from a singular voice, but discourse refers to "groups of statements" which then hold the power of representing knowledge about a particular subject matter "at a particular historic moment" (Hall 44). Thus, the power of discourse exists within specific cultural and social context to influence "how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others" (Hall 44). Discourse does not only have to be linguistic, the idea of discourse existing to regulate conduct and produce knowledge can be done through "language and practice" (Hall 44). Music festivals help provide these specific linguistic and practical

[2] "It wasn't until the late 1990s and early 2000s, with the establishment of Coachella, Austin City Limits and Bonnaroo, that single-destination festivals became the norm," replacing stadium shows and single concerts. (Johnson).

mechanisms for the formation of knowledge about not only the specific issues regarding the politics and discussion of race and gender, but for future discussions and understandings as the 'festival industry' continues to grow and evolve in the United States and around the world. The discourse resulting from festivals like Coachella and Lollapalooza involves making statements about acceptable social behavior, governing "what is sayable," as well as what is wearable, and depicting "subjects who in some ways personify the discourse" (Hall 43). Gatekeepers or tastemakers are focusing readers' attention on certain aspects of the culture of music festivals and cultural commentary is a consistent aspect of this discourse. It is not just one or two people, but a variety of viewpoints engaging in and producing discourse regarding these festivals.

The 'heterotopic' nature of the festival's space builds upon Foucault's 1967 work *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*. Stemming from the idea that a utopia is an unreal space in which society is either represented as perfect, or as "turned upside down," utopias do not manifest in any physical realm, thus, Foucault has coined the term heterotopia to describe physical spaces outside normal society that bring together different aspects of culture.

> There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society— which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted…. I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed, joint experience, which would be the mirror (Foucault).

Foucault speaks of a mirror as a space of heterotopia because it both exists in and outside of real space to allow one to see oneself, and when the heterotopia takes the form of a music festival, it allows culture and society at large to see itself. Foucault is saying a mirror is one example of a heterotopia, as well as numerous other places in society, which exist in every society, and can

have various form and various functions. Looking in a mirror brings the mixed experience of standing in one physical point and seeing something that has no physical point (the reflection). "In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself" (Foucault). The music festival can also be seen as a space of heterotopia because it stands at one physical point in society but also exists elsewhere in a virtual world, where the festival will continue to exist through discourse, recap videos and reviews. The heterotopian space itself provides a mirror to culture, the reflection, where festival-goers interact with one another and very often will see forms of 'themselves' in 'deviant' behavior on the festival grounds. But the discourse after the festival will offer a process of refracting and separating of the initial reflection. The festival also is a sort of counter-site that is produced and sold to society as a utopia (Lollapalooza recap video) which stands opposite from other public spheres as the festival is gated off, ticketed and quarantined to a specific space which will house subjects that will both represent and contest hegemonic ideology (bro-culture, hippies, punks, etc.); all these juxtapositions are at work in the heterotopia.

The festival as a heterotopian space possesses the metaphorical qualities of holding a mirror up to the cultures and subcultures that join to share the space. Through discussions of festivals after the event that alter and introduce discourse to discuss bro culture, white privilege, and racial injustice, the mirror of discourse not only reflects culture but it *refracts* culture. Scientifically, Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines refraction as "the process of deflection from a straight path undergone by a light ray or energy wave in passing obliquely from one medium (as air) into another (as glass) in which its velocity is different" as well as defining refraction theoretically as "the action of distorting an image by viewing through a medium" (Merriam-

Webster). As I will argue further in this paper, the image of bro-culture and masculinity is distorted through satire and the discourse concerning dominant white privilege is distorted when viewed through a specific satirical lens. And as discourse is a way of making meaning of the social world through language and practice, the discourse surrounding the music festival will work in a sense of the mirror first, to attempt to make bro-culture self-aware of its privilege before it can rebuild new understandings. The discursive refraction of the heterotopian reflection is really what contests the existing order of the social world, distorting the reflection through the medium of language, selected images and satire. Finally, discourse will exit the refraction stage and enter through a prism, to make visible certain features just as a prism will make certain colors visible. The discourse as a prism will make certain prejudices, privileges and insensitivities visible and then able to be acted upon for change.

Furthermore, the notion of utopia and heterotopia is carried out in a few different aspects of the music festival model. "The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault). The single real space of the festival contains incompatible sites within it. The incompatible sites consist of VIP spaces, general admission, hip-hop, indie-rock, electronic, various ethnic and political points of view and so on. The mere fact that the gates around Grant Park say 'Lollapalooza' then instill "deviation," or deviant behavior from that which the rest of society deems acceptable. During any day when Grant Park does not have gates around it saying 'Lollapalooza' there are not people drinking and dancing within the park.

Not only do festivals promote an idea to the individual of reverting back in time, to id, but they also accumulate time such as archives in a library, and they physically exist temporarily at a specific time. Foucault claimed that a few principles of heterotopia are they "are linked to the

accumulation of time," or are "linked, on the contrary, to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival" (Foucault). The modern large-scale American music festival as heterotopia holds both aspects of time, which Foucault expands on by saying,

> ...There are heterotopias of indefinitely accumulating time … in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit … By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place (Foucault).

Blogs, reactions, reviews, and photos are all posted online from the time the festival begins, and then again until the next annual festival. Social media stays buzzing for the weeks after the events inviting attendees to 're-live' the event through photos and video. This also invites a reversion in time, a reincarnation, and a jumbling of (virtual and real) time and (heterotopian) space.

Opposite the archival nature of festivals through discourse and critique, Foucault also said another form of heterotopia will be spontaneous in nature, where he actually cites festivals as a sort of transitory space for deviation.

> These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal [chroniques]. Such, for example, are the fairgrounds, these' marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclite objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth. Quite recently, a new kind of temporal heterotopia has been invented: vacation villages (Foucault).

The temporal heterotopia of festivals in a pre-digital age did not share the luxury of mechanical reproduction, which in a sense served to limit the discursive power of such gatherings to a transitory, fleeting sort of commotion, occurring in a specific temporal setting. Today's music

festival is a jumble of juxtaposition concerning time, being both archival and transitory, just as the heterotopia in itself is a juxtaposition of the physical utopia, of counter-action and reflection. When music festivals today have the luxury of at once possessing both the archival benefit of indefinite time and the transitory impulsiveness of a vacation village, an intense, emotional sort of discourse is born: one conceived from the emotional high of an intense delimited 'physical utopia' and is then able to be refined to point where it actually changes policy and ways of thinking, ways of observing the world around us. Thus, the effects of the transitory space and time can be prolonged and debated long after.

In understanding how heterotopias derive from enacted physical utopias, I would like to introduce a concept called audiotopia, which Josh Kun refers to as the way "music functions like a possible utopia for the listener, that music is experienced not only as sound, but as a space that we can enter into, encounter, move around in, inhabit, be safe in, learn from" (Kun 2). Kun's theory of audiotopia largely aims to frame popular music as a pedagogical tool to mapping the complexities of racial issues in America, but also with implications on the discourse and identity forming potential of popular music. When listening to an African Tribal rhythm, no matter where you hear it, you are hearing a specific culture and hearing what they value artistically and socially. Popular music in itself transports the listener across borders through sound to learn and interact with numerous cultures and societies. Audiotopia is crucial in the case of the large-scale American music festival. When one experiences live music, the aural utopian headspace of 'audiotopia' becomes realized in actual space. The actual music at a music festival serves to enhance the notion that in the heterotopia, there will be cultural contestation and inversion. Foucault said heterotopias were mirrors to society. When those mirrors do not exist, society cannot see oneself, and if society is not able to see itself, how then will people engage or form

discourse to comment upon sociological aspects that can reform societal norms or dominant ideas that need to be changed. The potential for cultural reflection is magnified when the audio-heterotopian space of the festival stands outside of everyday space and when the music at a music festival brings the safety and newfound social understanding from popular music to a heterotopian landscape.

Bridging the physical manifestation of audiotopia and the mirroring nature of heterotopias, audio-heterotopian festivals are a new and important space where culture is "simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (Foucault). The large-scale music festivals of Coachella and Lollapalooza are the crystallization of audiotopia and heterotopia, where people encounter, learn, deviate, represent, and contest. For people who attend festivals, young people and old people alike see themselves and thus, view the world differently upon having reflected. In turn, "the production of knowledge" and discourse plays out in how festivals are written about, circulated, reacted to and commented upon (Hall 44). As a result, policies are changed and behavior is adjusted. The combination of popular music's ability to shape identity and help people understand other cultures, and the heterotopia's ability to invert and mirror culture sets the stage for the proliferation of particular objects and forms of cultural criticism: discourse of bro-culture, coolness, white privilege and racial prejudices

Section 2: Discourse, Bro-Culture's Privilege, and Coolness

> This pop-collared-soon-to-be-shirtless douchestick used all his vacation days from his internship at Bear Stearns and has been hitting the gym all winter and is ready to rage to some Outkast! Most of the things he's wearing are salmon-colored and he really, really, really wants you to know how much money he makes and/or what frat he was in. (Ozzi, The 11 Types Of Assholes Who Attend Music Festivals).

In a style emblematic of the satirical tone that underpins (or overtakes) a popular form of cultural criticism stemming from the highly unique space of the audio-heterotopian music festival,

Noisey[3], in the passage above, targets the archetypal white, privileged, male. Think *Animal House* completely made 'un-cool.' The mirror metaphor provided from the heterotopias allows writers and members of a myriad of online communities such as *Vice, Consequence of Sound, Reddit, Tumblr,* etc. to engage in a cultural commentary, refracting what it is the mirror reflects. Often times, the mode of the commentary is satire and the reflection is one of hierarchy where white males sit at the altar. Many books and critical works have been produced of the function of satire in literature, art and film but festivals feed into a specifically interesting form of online satirical cultural commentary.

In *Comedy, Melodrama and Gender: Theorizing the Genres of Laughter* Kathleen Rowe notes comedy is an "attack on the Law of the Father and drive to level, disrupt and destroy hierarchy, to comment on and contest the values that tragedy affirms" (Rowe 43). Audio-heterotopias are both deviant, ludic, mirroring, and pseudo-utopian: it would seem natural for the reporting on them to convey comedy and astute observation. Also, the discourse of music festival recaps, lists, reviews, etc. does often aim to destroy hierarchy, and in particular, one specific hierarchy has received much attention: white masculine 'broism.'

Satirical jabs work to redefine 'coolness' away from the dominant male 'bro.' Described from *NPR*, bros are a type of man who is "jockish, dudely, stoner-ish, and preppy" (Demby). Analysis furthered by the Oxford Dictionary Words blog noted some of the complexities in tracing the etymology of the word 'bro,' and the numerous connotations the word has possessed in the 20th century.

> Today's bro is typically, if not exclusively, white, an interesting departure from the earlier African-American connotations of the word… Bro's meaning had begun to expand by the mid-20th century. It came to refer simply to a man (a synonym of 'fellow' or 'guy'), or sometimes more specifically a black man… By the 1970s, though, bro began to break new ground, untethered from brother. It came to mean not merely a guy, but a male friend…. By the end of the century, another, more subtle shift

[3] *Noisey* is a part of Vice Media and a popular online music website and blog

had begun to take place as well. Bro, as used in all of the ways described above, became particularly associated with a certain type of young man, a conventional guy's guy who spends a lot of time partying with other young men like himself (Martin).

(Ozzi, Digital Image)

Note, the term 'bro' semantically started with one connotation, and through time has been used to describe the ubiquitous masculine jock. Now, through discourse and commentary, the term is being inverted again, not racially, but aesthetically and ethically.

Taking into account poststructuralist views on language, we know that meaning is never fixed but always deferring to other words or signifiers, just as the current meaning of 'bro' contains traces of different origins from family relations and African American culture, to what it means today. Cultural phenomenon and shifting discourses serve to alter meaning and understanding. Jacques Derrida was very concerned with the interruption of meaning and how words can take on different meanings in new and different contexts in process called deconstruction. This complex method is summarized by David J. Gunkel as "a kind of general strategy in which to intervene in this and all other conceptual oppositions that have organized and

regulated, and continue to organize and regulate, Western systems of knowing [and] intervenes in the system" (Gunkel). Inversion is the first step of deconstruction and will "bring low what was high." Deconstruction also works within a system rather than outside it, is never completed and will be constantly working within the system it is trying to deconstruct.

> [Deconstruction] takes place as a parasitic operation that works within and by employing tools and strategies derived from a specific system… Deconstruction is never finished with that of which and on which it operates but takes place as a kind of never-ending engagement with the systems in which it takes place and is necessarily situated (Gunkel).

The tool in this instance is satire and the place to plant this parasitic hierarchical deconstruction is the audio-heterotopian space of the music festival- where the music festival is capable of juxtaposing in a "single real place" (the physical site of the festival) "several spaces" (bro culture, subculture, VIP spaces, general admission) "that are in themselves incompatible" (Foucault). It is in this incompatibility that the discourse around bro culture's perceived annoyance and privilege is not only disseminated but also starting to be deconstructed.

The discourse paints 'bro culture' more as a dominant identity than subculture. The same NPR article cites celebrities like Matthew McConaughey, Joe Rogan, John Mayer and others as examples of bro-culture. Bro-culture is the antithesis of subcultural style: it is the dominant mainstream identity for white, straight, middle class men. Thus, it is understandable why massive festivals like Coachella (which grossed $78,332,000, in 2014)[4] will attract the most common, dominant point of view; that of white men. Because large-scale festivals are a terrain rich with drugs, alcohol, music, appropriated 'rave-culture,' and deviation, they attract large numbers of the "conventional guy's guy who spends a lot of time partying with other young men like himself" (Martin). The photo and descriptions provided earlier regarding examples of bro

[4] "According to numbers reported to Billboard Boxscore" (Waddell).

culture being jockish, douchey, masculine, and so on codes bros as white, whether explicitly in visual form or implicitly in descriptions.

When articles like "This American Bro: A Portrait of the Worst Guy Ever," "THE BROS OF COACHELLA," "I am the FestivalBro," "10 kinds of bros you'll find at a music festival," etc. the binary of cool/uncool is being inverted just as the word "bro" or "brother" had been inverted from its original connotations. "While the heavy use of brother by those participating in social movements during the 1960s helped propel bro into the realm of casual conversation among activists, its more broad ascendance... was mostly due to lots of white kids trying to seem cool by emulating black slang" (Malady). In similar regards to the idea of deconstruction, the philosophy and politics around the notion of "cool" is about striking balance within paradox, as deconstruction wants to reconfigure the binary opposition that structure Western knowledge. The satirical discourse arising from festivals "cooly" deconstruct bro culture and white privilege in a parasitic reworking of what it means to be cool in today's youth culture, specifically within today's festival culture. In a relationship similar to the way "bro" began with African American connotations, so did the idea of cool. In *Philosophy Now*, professor Thorsten Botz-Bornstein tracks what exactly cool is, the origins of the word, and what it means in the modern world.

> The aesthetics of cool developed mainly as a behavioral attitude practiced by black men in the United States at the time of slavery. Slavery made necessary the cultivation of special defense mechanisms which employed emotional detachment and irony. A cool attitude helped slaves and former slaves to cope with exploitation or simply made it possible to walk the streets at night... So cool represents a paradoxical fusion of submission and subversion. It's a classic case of resistance to authority through creativity and innovation (Botz-Bornstein).

The philosophy of what it means to be 'cool' is steeped within notions of subversion and rebellion, not for style, but for survival. By utilizing a "fusion of submission and subversion," slaves, through the behavioral attitude of 'cool,' were thus able to not only cope with the exploitation of their basic human rights, but able to walk around freely (Botz-Bornstein). In the

same idea, the coolness of satirical deconstructive discourse, advocates for a freedom from the hierarchy and homogeneity that is so entrenched within the idea of bro-culture. This creative and innovate cool style of cultural critique can resist the authority and the intrusion of bro-culture while slyly staying detached, utilized through the comical jabs of satirical language.

Botz-Bornstein goes on to note that "the African American philosopher Cornel West sees the 'black-based Hip Hop culture of youth around the world' as a grand example of the 'shattering of male, WASP cultural homogeneity" (Botz-Bornstein). In an effort to strike balance within culture, whether it be representation, art, or political power, Hip-Hop culture is one example of the way the aesthetics of cool can be mobilized as a political tool. Another example is the way in which the aesthetics of cool can be understood in terms of a balancing act. "Coolness is a nonconformist balance that manages to square circles and to personify paradoxes… This paradoxical nature has much to do with cool's origins being the fusion of submission and subversion" (Botz-Bornstein). Again, the idea of a parasitic deconstructive operation taking place arises within the ways that satirical discourse submits to the power of bro-culture by not outright detesting it, but subverting it, with 'cool' detached language such as the following from an article titled "The Bros Of Coachella." "You bros are the unsung heroes of Coachella. Without you, who would brighten people's days with a clever ironic t-shirt? How would women be able to dance without the impending threat of being grinded on?" (Ozzi).

To combat the notion that cool can only refer to masculinity (perhaps in regard to the hip-hop example:)

> 'cool' does not only refer to a respected aspect of masculine display, it's also a symptom of anomie, confusion, anxiety, self-gratification and escapism… coolness is a matter of balance; or more precisely, of negotiating a way to survive in a paradoxical condition. It's about maintaining control while never looking as though you might have lost control (Botz-Bornstein).

The sense of control enacted from the behavior of cool goes to serve exactly what constitutes cool: the idea of balance- balance of subversion and submission, control and a lack of control, and the negotiation of paradoxical conditions. In regard to the discourse surrounding music festival patrons, the attempt to regain balance in the face of homogeneity is a site of social and political struggle. In an effort to regain more of a balance, participants in the discourse call out the power and control that bro-culture exhibits while also staying removed from using language that sounds like an overt offensive attack ('coolness' can't exhibit such overt power or energy) and parasitic in the deconstructive attempts.

The idea of cool works both ways in the regard of the discourse in question here. While employing their own method of cool language, discourse after the festival focuses its aim on the 'cool' of bro culture. Cool vs. cool, again, in an attempt to redraw balance. Few interviews on the ground at festivals will have a white male saying anything along the lines of "I wear this tank-top and throw myself at girls in an attempt to look cool," but through their stances in photos, arms flexed, staring away from the camera, barely dawning a smile, the cool detachment is at work not through direct linguistic means but through non-verbal clothing choices and body language. Apart from the balancing act of aesthetics in regard to the philosophy of cool, there is also a politics of cool which this festival discourse presents as well. In "The Politics of 'Cool'" Mariel Kanene interprets Robert Farris Thompson's *An Aesthetic Of Cool* to explain the ways in which the philosophy and aesthetics of cool become political.

> Within a democratic society, all parties are recognized as subscribers to the system of order. Active or inactive, all members assume ownership of political outcomes despite variances within individual interests... we are constantly making decisions in all realms (politics included) based on judgments of sentiment and taste…. The politics of cool entails control in perception of social awareness, esteemed ability in transcultural messaging, and the embodiment of an authentic cultural identity (Kanene).

Within the notion of cool, Kanene points out that the politics of cool do entail a certain aspect of control over "perception of social awareness." The idea of cool being a political and aesthetic

battleground plays out within the festival and to a larger degree after the festival in terms of write-ups and reviews. It is a battle of cool over two groups. The first is the largely white bro-culture. The second is everybody else. For anyone that does not fall into the first category, they too constantly make decisions based on the "judgements of sentiment and taste" over bro culture to try and regain "control in perception of social awareness." If the battle over the judgements of bro culture is also a struggle to regain balance over what is 'cool' and an effort to influence social perception, the large scale music festival as an audio-heterotopian landscape is the battleground.

Satire aims to "disrupt and destroy hierarchy" and in this case to disrupt and destroy hierarchical bro culture (Rowe 43). The portrait of the American bro needs to be seen at the most ludicrous in order to be most intensely satirized. The festival, the heterotopia, provides this portrait, at times at the most extreme. John Saward strikes with astute critique of bro-culture in his article titled "This American Bro: A Portrait of the Worst Guy Ever." "Flagrant offenses, irritating people, making noise, commanding an audience—this is what fuels him [the bro];… he is saying 'cunt' or 'nigger' or 'slut' out loud then half-apologizing to no one in particular... He tilts his head and neck back, cackling at the ceiling, electrified by the degree to which he does not give a fuck, by this ability to appall other people" (Saward). This is clearly satire and not a first person account, but rather an observation clearly grounded in specific first-hand experience.

The behavior described by Saward, as well as the " pop-collared-soon-to-be-shirtless douchestick" bragging about his income share a common trait of white privilege (Ozzi). The term, coined by Peggy McIntosh in "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," is her deconstruction of the ways in which whites are "carefully taught not to recognize white privilege," which acts as an "invisible weightless backpack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes,

tools and blank checks" (McIntosh). The key element in McIntosh's conceptualization of privilege is that you cannot see it. The satirical discourse arising after music festivals in reference to bro-culture makes that privilege visible and, through the parasitic operation of deconstruction, inverts their privilege into the gutter; blasting the arrogance of bro-culture with a weaponized slew of sly satire to the point where anyone flaunting such privilege would seem like an imbecile, like the out-group amongst those that follow the discourse resulting after a music festival; about the bands that rocked that were sparsely attended, about the ludicrous neon tank tops that the college frat boys were wearing, about their privilege to see the festival as their pool to pick up women. This is discourse at its most powerful, when it is able to refract and distort dominant views such as whiteness and feed them through a prism so as to sparse out the aspects that need reconfiguration and need new large social understanding.

Peggy McIntosh cites 26 conditions afforded to white people, including

> "I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared," "I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion," I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race," "I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented," (McIntosh).

Of those four conditions of white privilege, the first one deals with the inherent inclusion most white 'bros' will feel, while anybody else not fitting the bro-mold may feel like an outgroup. The second condition deals with the "obliviousness" of aspects of bro culture to appropriate other cultures; more on that later in the paper. The third condition cited refers to the way in which white, privileged males may attend music festivals and "swear," ridicule, and appropriate while having none of those qualities be attributed to poor morals or race. The fourth condition of white

privilege has implications on the way white males can feel confident when they go to a music shop (festival) they can see others who are similar to them represented on stage[5].

The discourse around bro culture in this instance is not going to eradicate a notion of white privilege from music festivals all together, but will hold a mirror to it and call it out, distort it through a series of refracting images and satirization, as DJ Seth Troxler did in a largely publicized manifesto on electronic music and music festivals. There is also a distinction between the hedonism satirized in the articles mentioned earlier, and the debauchery that would occur at underground clubs in Berlin, according to Troxler. In his manifesto he states "a girl doing lines of coke off another girls naked vagina? At a festival, that's gross. At Berghain, it would be kind of hot. In Berghain[6], that shit stands for freedom. At Ultra [in Miami], it stands for excess and trash" (Troxler). The distinction here also takes aim at bro culture, although Troxler does not use those words specifically. "A big bear of a dude in assless leather chaps and a leather harness on the dance floor" is something Troxler says is interesting compared to a sea of white bros falling over in the mud at a large scale music festival (Troxler). Troxler is also 'de-cooling' the myth of partying and hedonism associated with large scale music festivals, specifically as they apply to co-opting 90s rave culture for the masses.

Apart from being 'uninteresting,' discourse will note one of the pitfalls of the proliferation of bro-hedonism in music festivals is that it serves to white-wash the unique cultures and points of views on the margins, whether that be washing away representation of other race or genders, or through their exercise of white privilege. Bros are the ultimate non-threatening and non-discerning consumer for festivals to market towards. Lacking the political radicalism of punks,

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[5] "Since its inception in 1999, the average of female-driven acts at Coachella represents about 16% of the total bill, and throughout the festival's history on the whole, there has never been a year with more than a 25% female lineup" (Kelly & Sherman).

[6] An underground nightclub in Berlin, Berghain is dark, has no VIP section, and no mirrors.

mods, skaters, etc. bros tend to buy in wholeheartedly to new trends, or any kitsch or commercial or targeted brand marketing. Furthermore, as singer Emma-Lee Moss (Emmy The Great) noted in her article "Ten Things Emmy The Great Learned at Coachella;"

> On the Sunday I spotted a couple of dudes wearing Bro-chella headbands… I asked them ... which bands they had heard of and what they were excited to see, and they told me they had been to Ellie Goulding, Pharrell, and The 1975. I asked them if they had heard of Arcade Fire, they said no, but they were totally up for finding out who they were. I asked them if they were excited for Calvin Harris, they said yes. From this I deduced that what has happened is that pop has expanded into the alternative world and is bringing its fans along for the ride… The night before, I witnessed Muse play to probably the smallest crowd I have ever seen a festival headliner play to. The message was clear: the message was RAVE (Moss).

Emmy's observations match what many have noticed as more than an annoyance in terms of music festival attendees, and why some have said "It's EDM's Fault Outkast Flopped" at Coachella and why, in "THE CLIQUES OF COACHELLA AND THEIR OPINIONS OF EACH OTHER," a Coachella festival attendee is quoted as saying "I'm here for the girls. I'm here for the bitches" (Khawaja). A major criticism has circulated after the festivals, highlighting a specific bro-culture prevalence, and their insistence on solely attending music festivals to hit on women, take drugs and get drunk is not only an annoyance, but a sort of privilege that will be called out, whether in satire such as "This American Bro: A Portrait of the Worst Guy Ever" or directly in "Festival Fail: Why Such A Bro-Fest?"

What bro culture lacks in skepticism they make up for in numbers. Data on attendees' race and gender at Coachella and Lollapalooza is rather non-existent. There is homogeneity at major festivals, as Dr. Linda Wilks gathers in her research article "Bridging and bonding: Social capital in the music festival experience." At the festival, attendees were observed to be relatively homogeneous in their socio-demographic characteristics. "The findings of this study suggest therefore that bonding at festivals is only between people already known or socially connected to each other, not merely between people who share social and cultural similarities" (Wilks).

Within homogeneity however, there are also subsets of cliques. The *Vice* article "THE CLIQUES OF COACHELLA AND THEIR OPINIONS OF EACH OTHER" should not be taken as academic, sociological proof of subsets within homogeneity at music festivals, but should not be completely written off either. Much like other satirical *Vice* articles, the post comes accompanied with photos of people that anybody who has frequented a large-scale music festival will recognize. Furthermore, writer Jemayel Khawaja conducted real interviews with various "cliques" or subcultures at the festival, but all photographed are white except the "Asians."

The further point is that there is a recognizable homogeneity of white males at large-scale music festivals in America, and in England as well, the setting for Dr. Wilks' study. But where Wilks claims "new and enduring social connections with previously unconnected attendees was not, however, found to be a feature of festivals," I claim that it is found at the level of festival discourse and cultural criticism *after* the fact, after the audio-heterotopian high has worn off and the enduring reflection of society that it reveals is able to be comprehended by those who attended (Wilks). Heterotopias are able to juxtapose several incompatible sites in a single real place. Meaning, festivals, because of their heterotopian nature, are able to simultaneously house homogeneity and heterogeneity all at once. Because of the festival's relation to audiotopia, festivals also have a pedagogical role to "offer the listener and/or the musician new maps for reimagining the present social world" (Kun 2). The discourse surrounding large-scale American music festivals picks up on this audiotopian opportunity, and provide a new way of talking about and representing issues of bro culture and white privilege in order to make new meanings or understandings of white males enter the public sphere.

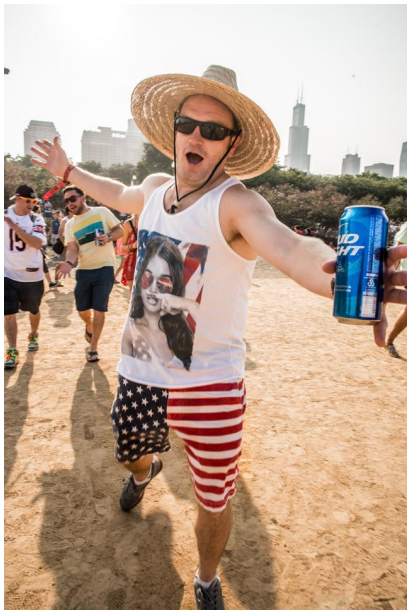
Section 3: Racial Injustice as it exists at the Festival

While, in terms of bro-culture, the discourse around music festivals attempts to not only deconstruct notions of the 'coolness' of white privilege, but also operates an inverse function as well, namely bringing to the people's attention the disadvantage and marginalization of others who do not share the same notions of privilege as bro-culture has gone to enact over the audio-heterotopian festival land. I would like to look at one case study in particular, an incident that occurred at the 2014 Lollapalooza Music Festival in Grant Park in downtown Chicago. At least in 2014, this was a mainly white festival. Without solid empirical data, this point is made through largely first hand experience from myself, as well as outlets commenting on the white, 'patriotic' American style of many of the attendees. In "Flag Swag: Lollapalooza's Style Was Patriotic As Shit," Britt Julious notes

> ...Lollapalooza, in stark comparison to many of the other major summer music festivals in the country, is the Most American. Chicago and Lollapalooza do not invoke the contemporary hippie aesthetic of Coachella or the Southern charm of Bonnaroo… This ode to Americana was in full force during the festival weekend, with many festival goers sporting their own interpretations of the American flag, whether it adorned folded headbands (a popular choice among groups of the swole, tan, tank topped bros) (Julious).

In proceeding, I want to be clear that there at least three levels of discourse to analyze here. The first level of discourse is the immediate response by certain festivalgoers, gatekeepers and bloggers to comment upon and critique the dominant hegemonic culture that exists within the festival. The second order or discourse follows, and will be the subject here in the reaction with case of Blood Orange at Lollapalooza. This level of discourse is able to break beyond the blog community and festival-going culture to include larger mainstream media outlets that may not publish the form of satire noted above, but will report on what they view as larger social and political issues at the music festival. Sometimes the reporting will be drug overdoses, a large pop

star performing, or in this case, an incident of racial injustice enacted upon a performer. The third level of discourse will be addressed in the following section, focusing on specific cultural effects that result in policy change over what is wearable at a festival and trends in the *type* of music festival one can attend.



(Shalamanova)

The white male, with a straw-hat and American flag board shorts at Lollapalooza is emulating and signifying all the hallmarks of a sort of 'Americana' (with a capital 'A'). The person depicted above is representative of who Dev Hynes, or Blood Orange, performed for Friday, August 1st. Born in Houston, raised in East London, and now residing in New York, Hynes is a man of the world. As Out Magazine notes, "his mother emigrated to England from Guyana to become a nurse, and his father is from Sierra Leone" (Lamphier). The article titled "How Devonte Hynes of Blood Orange Saved Pop Music" also notes how his "frankness and his relaxed stance on the subject of labels call to mind Bowie's widely publicized embrace of bisexuality some four decades ago" (Lamphier). Hynes has also stated "I wouldn't call myself straight. [My girlfriend] Samantha doesn't call herself straight, either. She has had female lovers,

and I have had transgender lovers" (Lamphier quoting Hynes). It was this sense of multiculturalism and progressive identity politics that Blood Orange brought to the Midwest stage at Lollapalooza, where many festival goers were embracing an Americana, embracing whiteness, bro-culture and the American flag; where "rabid creatures of all types of white people aged 18 to 24 [were] overflowing with lust and rage and sea captain's hats" (An 18th Century Traveler). Blood Orange was aware of the audio-heterotopian nature of the music festival, and wanted to use the mirroring qualities of the space to bring another political issue to the forefront, police brutality and racial injustice in America. Blood Orange's set the day of August 1st was not only a uniquely touching musical performance of soul, R&B and funk, but began as a political call to arms to bring attention to the injustice that befell Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Jordan Davis and many other unfortunate African American lives that ended in tragedy at the hands of police abusing their power (the performance occurred just 8 days before Michael Brown was shot by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri). Wearing a white T-Shirt with Martin, Garner and Davis' name on it, Hynes gave a moving speech to the Lollapalooza crowd telling them to film the police and to know their rights as citizens. The irony of this political statement against police brutality entering into the discourse at a festival space right before the Brown incident is not the only form of tragic irony that was at work that afternoon. Shortly after his set, Hynes in a series of tweets, wrote:

> Samantha and I just got assaulted by the security. We are about to press charges… They grabbed her I asked what they were doing and they grabbed my neck and threw me to the ground, then two others joined in on me… I'm in pain, what the fuck. The irony after my t shirt and message this morning, we are in shock… I gave a speech on racism and police brutality and then I am jumped by three security guards and my gf is assaulted. @lollapalooza… Apparently people are tweeting & writing on @lollapalooza Facebook page and they keep deleting the comments… If they're doing this to the musicians playing, then how have they been treating all the attendees throughout the day? (Rettig compiling Hynes' tweets).

The treatment of Hynes recalls notions of white privilege, and its inverse, racism As McIntosh notes, white privilege affords those who are white the ability to "speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial" and the privilege "to be in the company of people of my race most of the time" (McItosh). These privileges were not afforded to Hynes amidst a mostly white mass music festival in Lollapalooza. Hynes himself propelled the discourse arising from the incident, where through social media he had the agency and the fan base to illuminate a deep-seated ideological fault within American society, just as he used the stage as a political platform to deconstruct racism in America during his performance. Blogs, newspapers, and major news outlets picked up Hynes' story after the fact, adding to the discourse created from Blood Orange during his set, and created by Hynes and the attacking security guards after his set. Lollapalooza saw first hand that the juxtaposition of transience and digital afterlife when they could not systematically expunge the discourse over racial injustice and white privilege from not only Hynes' set, or his thoughts on the incident, but from the community of festival goers who were outraged by the incident and took to writing on Lollapalooza's Facebook page.

The alleged attack is tragically ironic, but symptomatic of what Hynes was trying to draw attention to during his performance, and what discourse over bro-culture tries to draw attention to in regard to masculinity, patriarchy and privilege. Picked up from outlets such as *The Huffington Post*, *Pitchfork Media*, *Chicago Sun-Times* and most all the main music blogs (*NME*, *Spin*, *Consequence of Sound*,) Blood Orange's case in an opportunity to study the way large scale music festivals are not simply utopian villages, and not simply apolitical as Dr. Wilks may imply in her study, but they are mirroring spaces of heterotopic deviancy that may show us the good side of artistic talent and interpersonal communication offline in real space, but also some dominant ideas that manifest themselves in terms of style and behavioral codes at music festivals.

With post-festival discourse, blogs can satirize, pick up on, demythicize, deconstruct and rebuild new meanings as they work to do in regard to bro-culture, and as they revealed by picking up a story about Dev Hynes and his girlfriend being attacked and beaten when outlets like the *New York Times* left the story untouched. Untouched, as well, by Lollapalooza who issued a run-of-the-mill PR-laden statement.

Britt Julious addresses the exclusivity and emphasis of festivals catering to white privilege when she writes:

> Perhaps because so many of the mainstream festivals curate lineups and offer ticket prices that exclude swaths of the population–who are largely black, Latino, poor–the gate jumpers, drug abusers, drunken messes I see at summer music festivals are mostly white… The larger and more exclusive music festivals like Lollapalooza become, the more likely we are to see incidences in which anyone that doesn't fit the "image" (white) will be harassed in the name of appearances and prejudices and racism. (Julious).

Julious is working politically in her blog post just as Dev Hynes was during his performance. The exclusivity that massive festivals try to promote is an unattainable ideal in the minds of festival promoters. The discursive power lies in every attendee's iPhone shall they be engaged to utilize it, either at the festival or after. If certain 'Americana' clad white males did not even see Blood Orange, or read about it after, maybe a photo of their face or one that mirrors their own appears on one of the numerous deconstructive satire pieces the following day.

Section 4: Concluding With Cultural Effects and Alternate Festival Models

Other than festivals producing cultural criticism that deconstructs and reframes notions of cool, white privilege, bro-culture and racial injustice, discourse around music festivals can also produce and promote tangible cultural effects that in some cases results in policy change and a re-imagination of the music festival experience.

The cultural effects and policy change can be seen in the discourse around cultural appropriation of Native American headdresses at large-scale music festivals. Throughout recent years it has become trendy for festival-goers to wear Native American headdresses and war bonnets, culturally appropriating these Native American customs for fashion or irony. The Staff Writer for Mic News[7], Zak Cheney-Rice, helped to create discourse around this issue in an attempt to refract the image of the Native American headdress being culturally appropriated, and passed this distorted image through a critical prism to separate fashion and irony from racism and insensitivity. Cheney-Rice points out an

> ongoing pattern of non-Native Coachella attendees rocking traditional American Indian attire they would never wear elsewhere, like it was a Batman costume or something… These Coachella attendees aren't the only perpetrators, of course. But it's reached a point that people commonly associate the festival with rich white kids in Native headdresses, and that's not something to be proud of. With the issue of cultural appropriation becoming an increasingly high-profile topic of discussion, one would hope more people start realizing how problematic such actions are and adjust themselves accordingly (Cheney-Rice).

Bass Coast Music Festival in British Columbia, Glastonbury in the UK, and Tall Tree in British Columbia are three music festivals that have done exactly what this form of discourse has called for, by banning and restricting Native American headdresses and fashion attire. The discourse around cultural appropriation at the music festival has been so effective toward building new understandings for how insensitive appropriation can be, and certain festivals have adjusted themselves accordingly. This policy change is indicative of the discursive power that audio-heterotopian music festivals hold to reimagine and reconfigure the music festival experience as well as inform and comment upon the effects of bro-culture and white privilege.

Furthermore, the rise of popularity of what can be called the "transformational festival" offers a new way for people to experience the large scale American music festival, offering

[7] Mic News is a newsletter based in New York City. Interestingly enough, their twitter biography reads, "Rethink the World."

attendees a series of workshops, lectures, seminars and other educational materials in addition to live music in the festival experience. The transformational festivals produce discourse of inclusivity, sensitivity and creativity that mainstream festivals do not emphasize; more on transformational festivals later in this section.

The mainstream appropriation of costuming sacred Native American headdresses and war bonnets has been an issue that many Native Americans have taken issue with. Bear Witness, a member of the Ottawa electronic group "A Tribe Called Red," has been especially outspoken on this issue as a Native American performer who sees this cultural appropriation in the crowd he often times performs for.

> You'll see someone wearing a headdress in the same picture as a totem pole and a canoe when actually those are from three different cultures… The totem poles are from the northwest, headdresses are from the plains and the kind of canoes you usually see are woodland canoes. So it's robbing us of our individual cultures (Lynskey quoting Bear Witness).

Until 2014, in the midst of the items becoming a fashion accessory for white people to play dress up at festivals, Native American appropriation has reached a surge of backlash and has entered into the second and third order of discourse. Popular media outlets now see cultural appropriation as an issue that needs to be addressed, due to commentators such as Bear Witness and Zak Cheney-Rice.

"The festivals and festival culture have brought a new frame of discourse around the issue" according to *The Guardian*'s article "This means war: why the fashion headdress must be stopped" (Lynskey). This particular article even says this recent backlash has been a "classic example of online activism," and that it has not reached the official, sanctioned spaces of American politics (Lynskey). Instead, this issue's position in public discourse rests upon the digital realm of social media, by the festivalgoers and performers themselves to comment upon

why it is not okay to masquerade in a culture's sacred customs and why white privilege will be called out when their privilege becomes overtly insensitive to certain groups. While "this summer, headdresses, often accessorized with fluoro warpaint, have been ubiquitous at festivals from Coachella to Latitude," the festival discourse has now refracted what has become problematically ubiquitous within festival culture, and sent this distorted image through a prism to sparse the reasons why cultural appropriation is insensitive and should not be celebrated (Lynskey). The audio-heterotopian space festival has created new spaces for reimagining the present social order. Certain music festivals have decided to hear the dissenting voices and rethink the ideology around white privilege's appropriation.

Bass Coast Music Festival in Merrit, British Columbia issued the following statement regarding their ban on Native American headdresses:

> For various reasons, Bass Coast Festival is banning feathered war bonnets, or anything resembling them, onsite. Our security team will be enforcing this policy. We understand why people are attracted to war bonnets. They have a magnificent aesthetic. But their spiritual, cultural and aesthetic significance cannot be separated. Bass Coast Festival takes place on indigenous land and we respect the dignity of aboriginal people. We have consulted with aboriginal people in British Columbia on this issue and we feel our policy aligns with their views and wishes regarding the subject. Their opinion is what matters to us (Bass Coast Music Festival).

In effect, the barrage of discourse and backlash from bloggers and even a group within music festival culture, "A Tribe Called Red." who are vocally political regarding this issue, has taken effect and enacted a policy change. In this instance the music festival space has not only refracted culture to alter a discourse and a way of talking and knowing about certain issues, but has gone so far as effectively changing what is governed and what is wearable.

Discourse of frustration and numerous refracted notions of bro-culture within mainstream American music festivals has led to not only policy change within festival culture, but a rise in a new form of music festival; the 'transformational festival,' or in some cases, 'anti-bro festival.' In

2010 Jeet Kei Leung, the director and producer of The Bloom Series[8], gave a TED Talk on the subject of transformational festivals, placing the music festival even further into a place of serious intellectual consideration through a broad, mainstream outlet such as the TED Talk. Leung, in the lecture, said transformational festivals are a "global phenomenon" which is largely ignored or unreported by mainstream media. Since that year, transformational festivals have been reported on, researched, and documented, but still remain largely a "new evolutionary culture… with no agreed upon identifiers or labels" (Leung). The idea that these festivals are not easily classifiable or identifiable with any singular subculture is part of their aim. These festivals are an evolutionary culture in that they evolve from discourses of frustration with other festivals and in that the represent a sort of reversion back to shared villages where everybody contributed to the creation of the village and benefited from it. The *New York Times* published an article in September 2014 titled "The Progeny of Burning Man: Burning Man Spawns New Age Festivals," and countless academic works have focused on the new age or transformational festival in North America over the last ten years.

What I am interested in is the discourse that arises from the more mainstream American large-scale music festivals that when studied as a body of work, paints a rather frustrated portrait of the heterotopian spaces of mainstream festivals. The numerous blogs and articles I listed earlier ridiculing bro-culture for what they saw as arrogance and privilege adds an air of frustration to the discourse around festivals. Through the refraction of culture, the satire, controversy and general mockery of the large-scale music festival runs rampant, and these discourses have given festivalgoers motivation into seeking an alternate festival experience in the transformational festival. The "evolutionary culture" of transformational festivals is an evolution away from bro-culture and commodification as they exist within the mainstream festival spaces to festivals that

[8] The Bloom series is an online documentary series focusing on transformational festivals.

provide music, dancing, and camping, like the large-scale festivals, but with a pedagogical aspect. Workshops at transformational festivals will include a variety of interests such as sustainable living, raw foods, yoga, fine art and many more. The workshops as well are an evolution from the Heineken Dance Tent at Coachella or the various brand-sponsored spaces at Lollapalooza. At Lightning in a Bottle Festival, workshops included "topics like organic food ('Seitan for the Masses'), plant medicine ('Reishi Mushroom & Spiritual Consciousness'), gender studies ('The Art of Healthy Feminine Leadership') and sex ('Tantric Lap Dance Workshop')" (Allison).

Looking at the way transformational festivals sell themselves, the language is built upon radical re-imagination of not only the festival but also of the 'self.'

> Real transformation means meeting your animal body, stepping into the underworld, and letting go of our hard-won boundaries long enough for something to reshape… participation in truly transformational festivals – however much they may present themselves as hedonistic celebrations – require a sacrifice of whomever we thought we were (Garfield).

The transformational festival sets itself up as an out of body experience, stepping not into another world but an "underworld." And the notion of sacrifice arises as well, contributing to a communal emphasis where each festivalgoer contributes to the production of the festival, or sacrifices something in order to receive a rewarding experience from the festival. With bro-culture being the antithesis of subcultural style, the transformational festival positions itself as a counter-site to modern life; where notions of art, education and free spirit are not only entertained but nurtured toward 'self-transformation' and where there are no identifying labels. If the discourse around large-scale music festivals attempts to refract notions of white identity then the transformational festival takes this a radical step farther by trying to place self-identifying categories through a prism to break down the entire notion of identity and self. Significantly, in an attempt at

eradicating bro-culture and white privilege all together so no one person may feel privilege over another.

Transformational festivals are also a return to ancient tribal rituals focusing on communal creativity and inclusion, where mainstream festivals have been built on marketing and the "Web 2.0" generation as Leung puts it. Attendees are no longer hidden behind roles at transformational festival that you would experience in daily lives. They take place out in nature, far away from urban centers and cities. New York Times reporter Julia Allison attributes the popularity of transformational festivals to

> an amalgamation of several cultural forces: the rise of electronic dance music, the maturing of the rave culture, the popularity of TED-like talks, the mainstreaming of yoga, and the YOLO spirit of festivalgoers who spread the word on social media. Unlike more mainstream music gatherings like Coachella and Lollapalooza (with their focus on pop music, celebrities, alcohol and fashion brands), transformational festivals embrace feel-good values like ecological sustainability, organic food, community building and wisdom sharing (Allison).

Two forces in particular, TED-like talks and social media, are mediums focusing on language. Their use of language to refract and make visible certain aspects of festival-going culture they would like to see more prevalent has a direct impact on transformational festivals' popularity as an alternate festival model. Those attending a festival that do not want to support security guards profiling and beating performers of color, or festivals that cater to the commodified taste of upper middle-class white males, find their evolution as festivalgoers toward events like Burning Man, Lightning in a Bottle and Evolvefest among many others. This is not to over-romanticize the transformational festival or to say these transformational festivals exist outside of the economy or do no participate in commodity of any sort. But the transformational festivals' promotional discourse attracts people "who want to co-create an unpretentious dance party in celebration of sacred art and community," said a transformational festivalgoer (Allison quoting Weiseth). This

goal of co-creation and community in the transformational festival is a reactionary gesture against the bro-culture and privilege of other festivals and toward building understanding and meaning of a myriad of alternate lifestyles.

One transformational festival has even been labeled the "anti-bro" festival by writer Eric Sundermann. Taking place in Iowa City, the Mission Creek Festival is an annual arts and music festival that caters to an underground (or 'underworld) progressive community. As Sundermann notes, part of what Mission Creek Festival is doing is creating its own discourse around Iowa City and how the world perceives the city's values. "Walking down the street in Iowa City will give you a taste of the hottest trends in spiky gel hair-cuts and how sick (read: awesome) the previous Thirsty Thursdays was, but Iowa City has always—mainly through festivals like Mission Creek—locally defeated its reputation for jackass behavior" (Sundermann). The interesting point is that this sort of transformational festival, and the discourse here that arises from the event, is working to refract and distort notions of what Iowa City's culture can entail, and then through the prism of discourse separating those aspects which the transformational festival would like emphasize.

> Quite honestly, the culture of the city is just bizarre. Each "side" isn't too fond of the other, but there are strangely beautiful moments when they come together—like on a Friday night during Mission Creek at the Yacht Club, a local venue that specializes in Sublime cover bands, when Brooklyn's shoegazing specialists Weekend take the basement stage and tear it up for 35 minutes. At that point, no one gives a fuck who is who and if they're wearing sweaters or Northface—instead, everyone's just lost, together, in a haze. Moments similar to this rang true throughout the entire festival... (Sundermann).

Attribute the subcultural convergence to music's function as audiotopia, but also to the way in which the festival space created the physical manifestation of the ideas of audiotopia, to create new meanings and new convergences through sound. This, and many other transformational festivals produce discourse of inclusiveness, but also are born and popularized from discourse of frustration with mainstream festivals, and discourse of exclusivity that festivals like Lollapalooza

promote by catering to whiteness and efforts to exclude the "other," whether that be ethnic or socioeconomic.

Through charting the various discourses around large-scale American music festivals, it is clear that these audio-heterotopian spaces do hold political and cultural power. Foucault was clear to point out that heterotopias could take various forms and functions within cultures; in today's society the music festival is one of the most popular forms of heterotopian space. The main component of their power is discourse surrounding the music festival after the festival itself. Although often branded and corporately sponsored, it is important to understand these festivals as serious spaces that promote new understandings of the social world, as well as take seriously the satirical discourse that harnesses the power to create new cultural and political meaning through language. The discourse will refract what is occurring culturally within the festival gates and it is not a wasted effort. The bro-bashing and appropriation-hating words of a democratic 'blogosphere' steep into public ideology, their discourse effective in creating new meanings of the social world for a larger group than just those who attend these festivals. Without an audio-heterotopian space such as the large-scale American music festival, these issues of race, privilege and appropriation may very well not be so prominent today.

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