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STK, a fully volunteer grass-roots organization rooted in hip hop and transformative justice, advocates for alternatives to, and the end of, the incarceration of all youth.

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Is Black Motherhood A Marker of Oppression or Empowerment? Hip-Hop and R&B Lessons about "Mama"

Cassandra Chaney and Arielle Brown

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on the lyrics of 59 songs (40 Hip Hop songs; 17 R&B songs; 2 songs that represented the Hip Hop and R&B genre) from 1961-2013 to identify the ways that Black male and Black female artists described motherhood. The songs were determined by Billboard Chart Research Services, and Black Feminist Theory provided the theoretical foundation on which the themes were identified. Qualitative analysis of the lyrics revealed Black motherhood in R&B and Hip Hop to be based on the following four typologies: (1) Motherhood as Source of Emotional Comfort and Support; (2) Motherhood as Source of Strength and Self-Confidence; (3) Motherhood as Superior to Fatherhood; (4) Motherhood as Teacher and Disciplinarian; and (5) Motherhood Instills Unconditional Endless Love. Supporting qualitative lyrics are provided to support each of the aforementioned themes.

For most Black women, the ability to create, nurture, and provide for their progeny holds boundless personal, cultural, and social significance. Although racism, sexism, and classism frequently make motherhood difficult,[1] becoming a mother is one of the most salient personal and social identity symbols for many Black women. Several years ago, Shirley A. Hill[2] wrote, "motherhood is a significant marker of womanhood. It provides a respectable social identity, an important set of child-rearing tasks, access to kin resource networks, and a space where authority, a sense of control, and self-expression can be cultivated."

Given the salience of this "significant marker of womanhood" for many Black women,[3] however, with few exceptions,[4] very little scholarly attention has been given to how Black male Rap artists discuss Black motherhood, and we are aware of no studies to examine whether descriptions of Black motherhood demonstrate oppression or

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[1] Katherine Fouquier, "The Concept of Motherhood among Three Generations of African American Women." *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 43, no. 2 (2011): 145-153; Michele Barzey, "Thick Love: Motherhood in Toni Morrison's Beloved and Julian of Norwich's Revelations of Divine Love," *Black Theology in Britain: A Journal of Contextual Praxis* no. 5 (2000): 9; T. Chedgzsey Smith-McKeever, Darryl Rowe, and Weihua Gao. "Socioeconomic and other Factors Influencing Depression: A Comparison of Black and White Mothers," *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work* 21, no. 1 (2012), 1-19; Miri Song and Rosalind Edwards, "Raising Questions about Perspectives on Black Lone Motherhood," *Journal of Social Policy* 26, no. 2 (1997): 233-245; Michael Rendall "Entry or Exit? A Transition-Probability Approach to Explaining the High Prevalence of Single Motherhood among Black Women," *Demography* 36, no. 3 (1999): 369-376.

[2] Shirley A. Hill, *Black Intimacies: A Gender Perspective on Families and Relationships*, (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2005), p. 120.

[3] Lawson Bush, "Solve for X: Black Mothers + Black Boys = X." *Journal of African American Men* 5, no. 2 (2000): 31-51.

[4] Tia Tyree, "Lovin' Momma and Hatin' on Baby Mama: A Comparison of Misogynistic and Stereotypical Representations in Songs about Rappers' Mothers and Baby Mamas," *Women & Language* 32, no. 2 (2009): 50-58.

empowerment. This study will extend the growing scholarly dialogue regarding the ways that the Hip-Hop and R&B genres speak to the personal, social, and cultural norms and values that are present in society.[5] While page constraints do not allow for a lengthy review of the difference between Hip Hop and R&B, it is important to note that these music genres are not the same.

Past scholars have found that while Hip Hop is a more radical genre that has historically advanced political activism and social consciousness and more recently, materialism and misogyny against women, R&B is a softer music genre that essentially encourages the free expression of romantic feelings.[6] Given the global appeal of both of these music genres,[7] this study will examine whether Black male and female artists in Hip-Hop and R&B discuss motherhood in terms of oppression or empowerment. Thus, the following four research questions will guide this study: (1) How do Black male and female Hip-Hop and R&B artists generally discuss motherhood? (2) How is Black motherhood a marker of oppression in Hip-Hop and R&B? (3) How is Black motherhood a marker of empowerment in Hip-Hop and R&B? (4) What, in any ways, have descriptions of Black motherhood in Hip-Hop and R&B changed over time?

This topic is important for four reasons. First, this study recognizes the current trend of single-parent births among Black women. According to recent statistics from the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) – African American Healthy Marriage Initiative (AAHMI) (2013), although the rate for single parent households in America has increased societally, this trend is "especially alarming among African Americans." Between 1960 and 1995, the number of African American children living with two married parents dropped from 75% to 33%. At this moment, 69% of African American births are to single mothers as compared to 33% nationally." In light of this statistical reality, this study will bridge the family studies and Hip Hop cultural studies literatures by examining whether empowerment or oppression is the driving force behind these statistics regarding Black motherhood. Second, this study builds upon and

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[5] Emerson, Rana, A. "Where My Girls At?: Negotiating Black Womanhood in Music Videos." *Gender & Society* 16, no.1 (2002): 115-135; Jamison, DeReef F. "The Relationship between African Self-Consciousness, Cultural Misorientation, Hypermasculinity, and Rap Music Preference." *Journal of African American Studies* 9, no. 4 (2006): 45-60; Kopano, Baruti N. "Rap Music as an Extension of the Black Rhetorical Tradition: 'Keepin' it Real'." *Western Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 4 (2002): 204; Pough, Gwendolyn D. *Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2004), 170-171; Taylor, Carl and Virgil Taylor. "Hip Hop Is Now: An Evolving Youth Culture." *Reclaiming Children and Youth* 15, no. 4 (2007), 210-213; Watkins, S. Craig. *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2005.

[6] Nelson George, *Hip Hop America*. (New York: Viking Penguin, 1998); Robert J Price, Jr., "Hegemony, Hope, and the Harlem Renaissance: Taking Hip Hop Culture Seriously," *Convergence* 38, no. 2 (2005): 55-64; Michael Ralph, "Hip-Hop." Social Text 27, no. 3 (2009): 141-146; Guthrie P. Ramsey, *Race Music: Black Cultures from Be-Bop to Hip Hop*. (California: University of California Press, 2003); James B. Stewart, "Message in the Music: Political Commentary in Black Popular Music from Rhythm and Blues to Early Hip Hop." *Journal of African American History* 90, no. 3 (2005): 196-225; Craig Watkins, *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2005).

[7] Price 2005 Ibid. Ramsey 2003 Ibid. Stewart 2005 Ibid. Watkins 2005 Ibid.

extends Tyree's (2009) work by examining how Black mothers have been perceived by male and female Hip-Hop and R&B artists over time. Thus, an historical lens allows us to better meet the objectives of the study and allows us to determine similarities and differences in how Black motherhood has been discussed in these music genres over time. Third, this topic builds on Black feminist scholarship by highlighting the voices of a historically marginalized group, Black men and women, in two very popular music genres among the Black populace (i.e., Hip-Hop and R&B) discuss how Black motherhood is demonstrated and perceived. Last, and most important, instead of highlighting the pathology of Black motherhood, this study is based on a strengths-perspective and seeks to understand the ways in which Black families in general, and Black mothers in particular, are strong. Our purpose in relying on a strengths-perspective is not to minimize the inherent struggles of Black mothers and their families, but to rather highlight the specific ways in which this unique demographic of Black women help their families to remain resilient in the face of multiple challenges.

Review of Literature

In the following literature review, we provide an overview of scholarship related to Black motherhood. Included within this overview are the risk and protective factors associated with Black motherhood, how dichotomous ways in which Black mothers have generally been described in Rap music, how Black women perceive motherhood, as well as the role of spirituality in the lives of Black mothers. Next, we provide the theoretical framework on which this study was built. Then, we describe the methodology that was utilized in this study. Following this, we present Hip-Hop and R&B lyrics that support the primary themes that were foundational in this study. Finally, we discuss policy implications regarding how Black motherhood is discussed within Hip-Hop and R&B music for these women and their families.

Black Motherhood

Interestingly, much of the current scholarship related to Black motherhood can be traced to a well-publicized national report that was published over four decades ago which cast a negative national light on Black women. In what is commonly referred to as "The Moynihan Report," the sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan[8] proclaimed the rise in mother-headed families was not due to lack of economic opportunities (e.g., stable jobs) afforded Black families, but rather a ghetto culture that encouraged and glorified out-of-wedlock childbirth. Several prominent Black scholars and civil rights leaders asserted the image of Black families and Black motherhood offered in The

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[8] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," Office of Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor (March 1965), www.dol.gov/asp/programs/history/webid-meynihan.htm.

Moynihan Report advanced negative stereotypes,[9] and since that time, a growing body of scholarship has been committed to highlighting the complexity of Black motherhood, sans the stereotypicality. In fact, some studies have offered a more fair and legally-balanced way of treating drug-addicted Black mothers[10] and have found that work, and not marriage, has been found to be a better way to decrease poverty among Black women than White women.[11] Motherhood has been found to be a salient protective factor for Black women in that they are less likely than White women to commit suicide.[12] While Moynihan's report ignored the consanguineal relationships that are typical in Black families, scholars have stressed the importance of extended family networks for Black families as well as how these networks contribute to global self-worth in Black mothers and their children.[13] To further support how motherhood may protect Black women from psychological distress, one study revealed that in spite of the external pressures that they frequently experience, Black mothers have lower depression rates than White mothers.[14] Even the academic success of Black women can be traced to their role as mothers in that a recent study found these women viewed college enrollment as a crucial step toward a positive self-definition and personal empowerment.[15]

Extant scholarship over the past several decades has relied on a multitude of lens to more closely examine the varied experiences of Black mothers. For example, one large-scale quantitative study that examined family stability within the context of early marriage and early motherhood found age at first marriage but not age at first birth to be significantly related to the increased probability of marital dissolution among Black and White mothers.[16] Other scholars have focused on the historical or negative impacts of slavery on Black motherhood,[17] how the poor socioeconomic position of Black

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[9] William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim*. (Vintage, 1976); Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 64-81.

[10] Enid Logan, "The Wrong Race, Committing Crime, Doing Drugs, and Maladjusted for Motherhood: The Nation's Fury Over Crack Babies." *Social Justice* 26, no. 1 (1999): 115-138.

[11] Hilarie Lieb and Susan Thistle. "The Changing Impact of Marriage, Motherhood and Work on Women's Poverty." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 27, no. 1 (2005), 5-23.

[12] Robert M. Fernquist, "Does Single Motherhood Protect Against Black Female Suicide?" *Archives of Suicide Research* 8, no. 2 (2004): 163-171.

[13] Susan McMahon, Erika Felix, and Thara Nagaraian. "Social Support and Neighborhood Stressors among African American Youth: Networks and Relations to Self-Worth." *Journal of Child & Family Studies* 20, no. 3 (2011): 255-262.

[14] T. Chedgzsey Smith-McKeever, Darryl M. Rowe, and Weihua Gao, "Socioeconomic and other Factors Influencing Depression: A Comparison of Black and White Mothers." *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work* 21, no. 1 (2012), 1-19.

[15] Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz, "Learning to Resist: Educational Counter-Narratives of Black College Reentry Mothers." *Teachers College Record* 115, no. 4 (2013): 1-31.

[16] Kristin A. Moore, and Linda J. Waite. "Marital Dissolution, Early Motherhood and Early Marriage." *Social Forces (University of North Carolina Press)* 60, no. 1 (1981): 20-40.

[17] L. Barzey 2000, Ibid.

mothers creates and sustains generational poverty,[18] as well as the need to providing legal alternatives other than stigmatizing and punishing drug-addicted Black women**.**[19]

Over fifteen years ago, Song and Edwards[20] conducted a qualitative examination of the experiences of single Black mothers in Great Britain. For the majority of these women, their greatest frustrations with being a mother were associated with the lack of financial, practical, and emotional support they received from their children's fathers as well as the inherent difficulties of coping with poverty and racism. While this study was not conducted among Black mothers in the United States, more recent scholarship has revealed the aforementioned to be some of the greatest concerns currently among Black single mothers in America.[21] More recent scholarship has shown that the mothering experiences of mothers are not the same. To support this, while Latina, White, and Black mothers use individual responsibility, monitoring, and organized activities to keep their children safe, race, class, and gender realities in society necessitate that Black mothers engage in a form of "protective carework" that can better help their children navigate numerous "hostile environments."[22] A few years after the study offered by Song and Edwards,[23] Rendall[24] identified the poor socioeconomic position of African Americans as one of the primary reasons why these women are more likely than women in other racial and/or ethnic groups to rear their children in female-headed households. In spite of the many challenges that they face, single motherhood has been found to be a protective factor (buffer) against suicide among Black women.[25]

Rappers and Their Mothers

Black motherhood has been described in a myriad of ways in the literature, and in general, Black mothers are held in high regard. In Tia Tyree's[26] study, in which she conducted a textual analysis of rap songs, Black male artists used positive terms such as "Queen," "Good Woman," "Strong Sista" to describe their mothers and characterized their mothers as comforting, trustworthy, supportive, and self-sacrificing. Rappers often expressed love for their mothers because of their self-sacrificing ways, and as a result, developed a strong desire to financially support and protect them. The financial support these men frequently offered their mothers was described in terms of buying their mothers extravagant gifts such as clothes and cars and moving their mothers out

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[18] Rendall 1999 Ibid.

[19] Logan 1999, Ibid.

[20] Song and Edwards 1997, Ibid.

[21] McKeever, Chedgzsey, Rowe and Gao 2012, Ibid.

[22] Sinikka Elliott and Elyshia Aseltine. "Raising Teenagers in Hostile Environments: How Race, Class, and Gender Matter for Mothers' Protective Carework." *Journal of Family Issues* 34, no. 6 (2013): 719 - 744.

[23] Song and Edwards 1997, Ibid.

[24] Rendall 1999, Ibid.

[25] Fernquist 2004, Ibid.

[26] Tyree 2009, Ibid.

of impoverished and dangerous neighborhoods into lavish homes and neighborhoods that provided greater safety.

Overwhelmingly, these lyrics supported the idea that Black mothers are strongly loved and appreciated by their sons. Tyree posited that the high estimation of Black mothers can be supported by rappers' descriptions of their mothers as "pure, spiritual, domestic and worthy of protection." According to noted scholar Michael Eric Dyson,[27] the love a Black male has for his mother is only slightly below the love he has for God. Although Black male rappers often used positive words to describe their mothers, they oftentimes described their oppressive experiences as well.[28] Black male rappers often referred to financial hardships and the economic plight their mothers faced when raising them independently. Tyree postulated that these testimonies affirmed the negative stereotype of the "welfare queen" that was present in the rap songs that were textually analyzed in her study. Interestingly, most Black male rappers used positive terms to refer to their mothers, yet used condescending terms to refer to the mothers of their children.

Baby Mamas

Tyree's study revealed distinct differences in how mothers are perceived. Although their biological mothers were highly regarded, Black male rappers' "baby mamas" were not given the same admiration and positive reference as the rappers' mothers in rap songs. Rap lyrics that described baby mamas were often saturated in misogyny and sexism and generally painted these women are opportunistic "gold diggers" and "drama queens." To support this point, in Tyree's study, 11 out of 12 songs contained negative content about the mothers of their children. Women were described as "gold diggers," who decided to get pregnant for the rapper only to secure her financial gain. After further analyzing the lyrics in rap songs, Weitzer and Kubrin[29] concluded the actions of "baby mamas" led Black male rappers not to trust or deem these women as worthy of respect. Correspondingly, Oware [30] hypothesized the misogynistic rap lyrics towards the mothers of their children can be explained by the expectations the Black male has for his partner. To make this point clear, Oware asserted that Black males may enter relationships with expectations to receive "motherly" love from their partners, or love that ensures despite their entrée into crime or other personal shortcomings. He further believed the Black male may desire this unconditional love because it reminds him of his mother and is an extension of the

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[27] Michael E. Dyson, *Holler If You Hear Me: Searching for Tupac Shakur* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2001).

[28] Tyree 2009, Ibid.

[29] Ronald Weitzer and Charis E. Kubrin, "Misogyny in Rap Music: A Content Analysis of Prevalence and Meanings," *Men & Masculinities* 12, no. 1 (2009): 3-29.

[30] Matthew Oware, "Decent Daddy, Imperfect Daddy: Black Male Rap Artists' Views of Fatherhood and the Family." *Journal of African American Studies* 15, no. 3 (2011): 327-351.

relationship that he has already established with his mother. Unfortunately, because of the general contempt for the "baby mama," the unconditional motherly love that the Black male seeks is unattainable, and may thus be a perpetual source of conflict between these men and their "baby mamas."

How Mothers Perceive Motherhood

While it is important to highlight how Black males view their mothers and the mothers of their children, it is also important to understand the female perspective regarding womanhood to better understand how this construct could affect how these women perceive and demonstrate motherhood. In Chaney's [31] qualitative study regarding how Black women define and experience motherhood, she found that most Black women attributed womanhood to feminine attitudes and behaviors. In particular, strength, sensitivity, and sensuality were definitive characteristics of womanhood. In addition to these attitudes, feminine behaviors such as familial care, physical appearance, and self-respect were also significant symbols of womanhood for these women. When asked about the experience or demonstration of womanhood, the participants emphasized domesticity, the ability of the woman to take care of her home, and leadership, the ability of the woman to lead in male absence.

Black mothers of rappers received several reaffirming messages via rap songs regarding their ability to successfully rear their sons as single parents, however, some Black mothers have expressed doubts regarding their ability to help their sons' transition to manhood. In Bush's[32] study, Black mothers had a great deal of love for their sons yet expressed concerns regarding their ability to teach their sons to be men. To support this point, Bush stated, "Logically, if there are aspects of manhood that only men can teach, then there must be aspects of manhood only mothers (women) can teach." Thus, although rap lyrics generally affirm the competency of these women to successfully rear their sons to adulthood, the findings in this study reveal the desire of Black mothers to be strong parental supports for their sons.

In a somewhat different vein, scholars have revealed somewhat conflicting findings regarding the amount of stress that Black mothers experience. Case in point: Davis, Sloan and Tang[33] examined the relationship between involvement in multiple roles and psychological distress among 380 Caucasian and African American women aged 18-60, focusing on women's roles as paid workers, wives, and mothers. Interestingly, the quality of the mother role was significantly associated with psychological distress, while role occupancy and role quantity were not. Furthermore, the African American and White women appeared to be affected similarly by the

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[31]Cassandra Chaney, "The Character of Womanhood: How African American Women's Perceptions of Womanhood Influence Marriage and Motherhood." *Ethnicities* 11, no. 4 (2011): 512-535.

[32] Bush 2000, p. 42.

[33] Cindy Davis, Melissa Sloan, and Catherine Tang, "Role Occupancy, Quality, and Psychological Distress among Caucasian and African American Women," *Journal of Women & Social Work 26*, no. 1 (2011), 72-82.

quality of their experience in the mother role. Contrastingly, for most Black women, motherhood was a positive source of affirmation and empowerment. [34] Katherine Fouquier[35] conducted in-depth interviews with 18 Black mothers from three different generations. Generation 1 included seven women between the ages of 65 and 83 years, who became mothers between 1950 and 1970, prior to the Civil Rights Movement. Generation 2 included five women, between the ages of 51 and 58 years, who became mothers between 1971 and 1990, after the Civil Rights Movement. There were six women in Generation 3, between the ages of 30 and 41 years, who became mothers between 1991 and 2003. Interestingly, these mothers described how they protected their children from various "isms" (Racism, Classism, and Sexism), the communal role that 'othermothers' and spiritual mothers have in facilitating the transition to motherhood and providing strong social support. Fundamentally, for these women, motherhood was a positive experience and a source of power that provided meaning, satisfaction, and respect within the family and the larger community.

Black Spirituality

When exploring Black motherhood, scholars have noted spirituality is frequently predicated on various aspects of the mother's spiritual state, and Black mothers feel the need to be spiritual.[36] For most Black mothers, spirituality is associated with their involvement with a religious organization, having a personal and intimate relationship with God, or frequently reading the Bible and relying on it as a source of comfort.[37] It is particularly interesting to note that Black mothers and their children have a high regard for spirituality. Case on point: Black males frequently attribute the goodness of their mothers to their inherent spirituality, and Black mothers expect their sons to become spiritual and further develop this spirituality once they reach manhood.[38] In Chaney's[39] study, African American women viewed spiritual development as a definitive characteristic of womanhood. To support this, when asked how women demonstrate womanhood, one participant in her study responded, "Womanhood is demonstrated by believing in good morals and in God." Thus, it is apparent that Black women believe that being spiritual is a conscious marker of womanhood as well as a definitive

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[34] Shannon Trice-Black and Victoria A. Foster, "Sexuality of Women with Young Children: A Feminist Model of Mental Health Counseling," *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 33, no. 2 (2011): 95-111.

[35] Katherine Ferrell Fouquier, "The Concept of Motherhood among Three Generations of African American Women." *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 43, no. 2 (2011): 145-153.

[36] Cassandra Chaney, "The Character of Womanhood: How African American Women's Perceptions of Womanhood Influence Marriage and Motherhood." *Ethnicities* 11, no. 4 (2011): 512-535; Cassandra Chaney,. "Religiosity and spirituality among members of an African-American church community: A qualitative analysis." *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought,* 11, (2008): 201-234.

[37] Bush 2000, Ibid.

[38] Bush 2000, Ibid.

[39] Chaney 2011, Ibid.

indicator of manhood in their sons.[40] In Bush's study, the Black mothers of males were prompted to describe manhood and masculinity, and interestingly, spirituality was a recurrent theme. These women believed that when their sons believed that God exists, they are real men and frequently used words such as Christian, "good morals," "moral obligation," and "religious" to define manhood and masculinity. Because spirituality is important to African American mothers, these women believed it important to pass on this value to their offspring in the hope that this will aid them in their move toward adulthood. According to Tyree,[41] Black rappers generally find their mothers' spirituality important, and when describing positive memories regarding their mothers through their lyrics, rappers frequently mentioned watching their mothers pray and attend church. In addition, some descriptions were supported with the name, "Angel," which also alluded to their mothers' spirituality as well as their own burgeoning spirituality. By depicting their mothers as pure, pious, and spiritual, this indicates that spirituality is desired, revered, and part and parcel of Black motherhood.

In her examination of the salience of religiosity and spirituality among congregants and church staff in a Baptist Church in the Midwest, Chaney's[42] qualitative study indicated fellowship, evangelism and discipleship, "positive internal experiences," and strong family ties to be the greatest benefits of church involvement for these individuals. "Positive internal experiences" were described as being refreshed spiritually after attending church. A participant in the study stated, "…I feel spiritually satisfied when I leave, and that really helps me get through the week" This participant's response underscored how these "positive internal experiences" have long term effects. Chaney posited these experiences allowed congregants to cope better with current stressors in their lives. Moreover, the spiritual refreshment gained from these "positive internal experiences" can specifically apply to single Black mothers, as well. After attending church services, these mothers gained strength to cope with the perpetual racism, sexism, lack of familial support, and socioeconomic difficulties they frequently faced. In addition, this scholar found the provisions of "spiritual guidance," advice, hope, and social supports to be the most salient features of religious involvement among church staff. Just as "positive internal experiences" allowed the members of the church to better cope with problems, so did the provision of hope. According to Chaney, this hope was provided when members were faced with economic and financial difficulties and this allowed them to feel as though they could "get through anything" with God's help. The literature on Black spirituality is particularly relevant as most congregations in the United States are female (approximately 66-88%),[43] and thus, Black women are more likely than Black men to experience the multiple benefits of religiosity and spirituality within this context.

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[40] Bush 2000, Ibid.

[41] Tyree 2009, Ibid.

[42] Chaney 2008a, p. 7.

[43] Sandra Barnes, "Whosoever Will Let Her Come: Social Activism and Gender Inclusivity in the Black Church," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, no. 3 (2006): 371-387.

Black Feminist Thought

According to Patricia Hill Collins, [44] Black feminist thought involves Black women creating unique perspectives of self, family, and society by relying on their "outsider within" position. These notions are created by Black women and are helpful in understanding the viewpoints of this marginalized group. Collins posited three themes regarding Black feminist thought: 1) self-definition and self-valuation, 2) "interlocking nature of oppression," and 3) magnifying the importance of African American culture. According to this scholar, self-definition for Black women is significant because it "...validates Black women's power as human subjects." Self-definition and self-valuation involve African American women choosing to define themselves beyond stereotypes created for them. For Collins, both self-definition and self-valuation are means through which Black women oppose their dehumanization by the dominant culture and create their own affirming identities. For example, images such as the mammy, matriarch, Black lady, queen, baby mama, and welfare queen have been used to control and oppress Black women. Cheryl Gilkes[45] stated these stereotypes have generally been applied to Black women because they have actively resisted various forms of oppression in society in order to protect themselves and their families. Moreover, examining this interlocking nature of oppression is important because when African American women render their viewpoint regarding societal tyranny, they are able to present a "clearer view of oppression"[46] due to being Black and female —neither of which are privileges in a White patriarchal society. Lastly, the importance of African American culture is included in the themes of Black feminist thought because this perspective allows scholars to focus on areas of African American culture that have not been thoroughly examined, such as how sisterhood bonds among Black women are established and maintained as well as whether Black motherhood is a source of oppression or empowerment. When studying Black motherhood, Black feminists scholars must examine the choices that are available to mothers who rear their children, how they perceive their children's choices, as well as how they demonstrate motherhood.

Method

This study used a qualitative approach that examined contextual themes present in song lyrics. In order to determine the songs that were chosen, several steps were taken. First, all songs had to be sung by Black artists in R&B or Hip-Hop and had to specifically be related to motherhood. Initially, we focused on songs that had the word

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[44] Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (1986): 14-29, p. 14.

[45] Cheryl Gilkes, "From Slavery to Social Welfare: Racism and the Control of Black Women," pp. 288-300 in Amy Smerdlow and Helen Lessinger (eds.), *Class, Race, and Sex: The Dynamics of Control.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1981.

[46] Collins 1986, p. 19.

"Mama," "Mamma," "Momma," "Mommy," or "Mother" in the song title, yet broadened our examination to include songs that were specifically related to motherhood that did not use any of the aforementioned words in the song title. Sole singers and groups were included in the analysis if the song's title and/or lyrics met the aforementioned criteria. This involved analyzing the song titles of over 100 songs between the years 1961-2013 from Billboard Research Services. Second, the complete lyrics of all songs were then analyzed, which were obtained from the following websites: http://www.aaalyrics.com, http://www.azlyrics.com, http://www.lyricsfreak.com, http://www.lyrics-now.com, http://www.metrolyrics.com, http://www.sing365.com and http://www.songs-lyrics.net. [The song title, singer or singers, year released, the individual or individuals that composed the song and the genre are provided in Table 1].

Second, after the songs were identified by the authors, the next part of the study involved: (1) identifying whether the song was provided by a solo artist or group; (2) determining the year that the song was released; (3) providing the individual or individuals that composed the song; (4) identifying the music genre; (5) providing direct quotes from the songs that directly supported Black motherhood; (6) providing a rationale regarding why the quotes selected directly supported Black motherhood; and (7) running statistical analyses on the aforementioned. The data were entered into a Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and frequencies revealed that of the total 59 songs related to motherhood that were identified, 40 songs represented the Hip Hop genre; 17 songs represented the R&B genre; and two songs represented the Hip Hop and R&B genre. In addition, 44 songs (74%) were provided by a sole artist; 8 songs (14%) were provided by a singing group; and 7 songs (12%) were provided by the artist and a featured artist. In addition, 30 songs (51%) were written by an individual or individuals other than the artist, 20 songs (34%) were written by the artist and another individual or individuals, and 9 songs (15%) were written by the artist. This systematic approach allowed us to respond to the questions of interest and established the validity and reliability of the research.[47]

Third, all songs were content analyzed using an open-coding process.[48] Although the research questions were determined at the beginning of the study, in keeping with normal open-coding techniques, no a priori categories were imposed on the narrative data. Instead, themes were identified from the lyrics. In order to concentrate on the primary themes that would serve as the focus of the current study, words and phrases were the units of analysis. This involved a *word by word* and *line by line* examination of the complete lyrics of all songs, keeping track of any emerging themes that were present, and using those themes to answer the question of scholarly interest. Essentially,

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[47] Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[48] Anselm Strauss and Juliet M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory, Procedures, and Techniques* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990).

this method allowed the first author to determine the patterns within and between songs as well as identify the typologies related to Black motherhood that were described in the songs. In general, 3-5 phrases comprised each theme. For example, the word "love" or the phrase "unconditional love" or the extended phrase "I will always love my momma," were all regarded as concrete descriptors of a mother's unconditional love for her child as well as the unconditional love that a child feels for his or her mother. Through this process, the first author determined the five major categories related to Black motherhood and confirmed the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the findings by providing the lyrics of all songs to the second author and having her go through the aforementioned process.

To further increase the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of these categories and subcategories, the first author created a Word file that included the song title, author, and complete lyrics of the 59 songs that were included in the study. The second author was instructed to become familiar with the typologies of Black motherhood identified by the first author, to thoroughly read the lyrics of all songs, and indicate on a Word spread sheet the typology or typologies of Black motherhood identified in all songs by placing an "X" in the appropriate column. The identified typologies were not mutually exclusive in that in cases where a song endorsed more than one theme, the song was coded with as many themes were present in that song. After a 96% coding reliability rate was established between the first and second author, it was determined that a working coding system had been established, and thus minimized the likelihood that personal biases from the authors informed the outcomes presented herein.

Song Title	Singer/s	Year	Writer/s	Genre
Mama Said	The Shirelles	1961	Willie Denton	**R&B**
Tell Mama	Etta James	1967	Etta James	**R&B**
I'll Always Love My Mama	The Intruders	1973	Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff, Gene Mcfadden and John Whitehead	**R&B**
Sadie	The Spinners	1974	Charles Simmons, B. Hawes, Bruce Jefferson, & Joseph Banks	**R&B**
Thanks for my Child	Cheryl 'Pepsi' Riley	1988	Full Force	**R&B**
I'm Outstanding	Shaquille O'Neal	1993	Alisa Yarbrough O'Neal, Erick Sermon, and Raymound Calhoun	**R&B**
Keep Ya Head Up	Tupac Shakur	1993	Tupac Shakur	**Hip Hop**
Sadie	R.Kelly	1993	R. Kelly	**R&B**
Dear Mama	Tupac Shakur	1995	T. Shakur, J. Sample, & T. Pizarro	**Hip Hop**
Guess Who	Goodie Mob	1995	Robert Barnett, Thomas Burton, Cameron Gipp, Willie Knighton, &Organized Noize	**Hip Hop**
All I Got Is You	Ghostface	1996	D. Coles, M.J. Blige, R. Diggs Jr., B.	**Hip Hop**

	Killah		Gordy, D. Richards, A. Mizell, F. Perren	
A Song for Mama	Boys II Men	1997	Kenneth Edmonds	**R&B**
4 Page Letter	Aaliyah	1997	Melissa A. Elliott, Timothy Z. Mosley	**R&B**
Every Ghetto Every City	Lauryn Hill	1998	David Axelrod, Lauryn Hill, Johari Newton, Tejunold Newton, Vada Nobles, Rasheem Pugh	**R&B**
I Honor U	Canibus	1998	Germaine Williams & Wyclef Jean	**Hip Hop**
Mama Raised Me	Master P. (featuring Snoop Dogg & Soulja Slim)	1998	Daryl Anderson, Calvin Broadus, Percy Miller, Jr., and James Trapp	**Hip Hop**
I Love My Momma	Snoop Dogg	1999	Broadus, Calvin/Williams, Lenny/Womack, Cecil	**Hip Hop**
Mom Praying	Beanie Sigel	2001	Dwight Grant, Brad Jordan, Harvey Scales, Justin Smith	**Hip Hop**
This Woman's Work	Maxwell	2001	Kate Bush	**R&B**
Blueprint (Momma Loves Me)	Jay-Z	2001	Shawn Carter, Al Green, Roosevelt Harrell	**Hip Hop**
Survivor	Destiny's Child	2001	Beyoncé Knowles, Anthony Dent, and Mathew Knowles	**Hip Hop and R&B**
Dance	Nas	2002	Nasir Jones	**Hip Hop**
Big Mama (Unconditional Love)	LL Cool J	2002	Simmons, Charles B./Hawes, Bruce/Jefferson, Joseph B./Smith, James Todd/Curry, Mark/Woolfolk, Joe	**Hip Hop**
Momma Knows	Will Smith	2002	Lennie Bennett, Willard Smith, Lance Bennett, Lemar Bennett, C. Wilson	**Hip Hop**
Motherfather	Musiq Soulchild	2002	Johnson, Taalib / Poyser, James Jason / Duplaix, Vikter	**Hip Hop**
She's Alive	Andre 3000 (Outkast)	2003	Kendricks, Andre Benjamin	**Hip Hop**
To My Mama	Bow Wow	2003	Gurd, Geoff / Lascelles, Martin / Foster, Gina / Hutchins, Jalil / Smith, Lawrence / Moss, Shad / Smith, Jonathan J / Sanders, Tenaia / Griffin, Rahman	**Hip Hop**
Momma	Brand Nubian	2004	DJ Alamo; Al Green; Willie Mitchell	**Hip Hop**
Look at Me Now (featuring Mr. Porter)	Young Buck	2005	David Darnell Brown (aka Young Buck) and D. Porter	**Hip Hop**
Nobody Knows	Nelly (featuring Anthony	2005	Jermaine Dupri, Paul Maurice Kelly, Cornell Haynes, James Phillips,	**Hip Hop**

			Hamilton)		Anthony Cornelius Hamilton	
Reason	Nas	2004	Schneider, Zoe/Manougazou,-/Kilger, Martin/Junco Wambrug, Mirta/Pyton, Ras	**Hip Hop**
You Only Get One	Skillz	2005	Shaquan Ian Lewis (aka Mad Skillz)	**Hip Hop**
Hate It or Love It	The Game (featuring 50 Cent)	2005	Jayceon Taylor and Curtis Jackson	**Hip Hop**
Hey Mama	Kanye West	2005	Kanye West, Donal Leace	**Hip Hop**
We Ain't	The Game (featuring Eminem)	2005	Songwriters: Rufus Cooper, Katari Cox, Jean Yves Ducornet, Michael Elizondo, Henry Garcia, Malcolm R. Greenidge, Curtis Jackson, Steve King, Marshall Mathers, Luis Resto, Delray M Richardson, Tupac Amaru Shakur, Jayceon Taylor, Andre Romell Young	**Hip Hop**
Benedicion Mami	Fat Joe	2006	L. Brown, J. Cartagena, L. Glover, H. Gordy, A. Story, N. Warwar	**Hip Hop**
I Made It	Jay-Z	2006	Carter, Shawn C / Rachman, Khalil Abdul / Winslow, Dontae	**Hip Hop**
Freedom of Preach	Ludacris (featuring Bishop Eddie Long)	2006	Bridges, Christopher Brian / Jones, William Larkin / King, Craig / Long, Eddie	**Hip Hop**
Dreamin	Young Jeezy	2006	Jermaine Jackson, Bill Summers, Claytoven Richardson, Jay Jenkins, Larry Batiste, Andrew Harr	**Hip Hop**
Bury Me A G	Young Jeezy	2006	Jay Jenkins, Kevin Crowe, Donald French, Clifford Brown, Mildred Jackson, Erik Ortiz, iii, Tupac Amaru Shakur, Iii Clifford Brown, Randy Walker	**Hip Hop**
Big Brother	Kanye West	2007	Kanye West	**Hip Hop**
Mama	The Dream	2007	Terius Youngdell Nash, Christopher Stewart	**R&B**
Mama	Chris Brown	2007	Christopher M. Brown, Eric Hudson, Atozzio Dishawn Towns	**Hip Hop and R&B**
No Hook	Jay-Z	2007	Sean Combs, Shawn Carter, Barry Eugene White, Levar Coppin, Deleno Matthews	**Hip Hop**
If (My Mommy)	Saigon	2007	Brian Carenard	**Hip Hop**

I'm Only Human	Rick Ross	2008	James III Harris, Rodney Kohn, Terry Lewis, Johnny Mollings, Leonardo V Mollings, J Newman, William Roberts, E Williams	**Hip Hop**
Superwoman	Alicia Keyes	2008	Alicia Keys, Linda Perry, Steve Mostyn	**R&B**
Momma Can You Hear Me	Talib Kweli	2008	Talib Greene	**Hip Hop**
Woman	Raheem DeVaughn	2008	Braun, Robin Hannibal Moelsted, Michael Edward Milosh	**R&B**
Mother	Ashanti	2008	Ashanti	**R&B**
3 Peat	Lil' Wayne	2008	Dwayne Carter, Vaushaun Brooks, Colin Westover	**Hip Hop**
Playing with Fire	Lil' Wayne	2008	Dwayne Carter, Nicholas M. Warwar, Jason Joel Desrouleaux	**Hip Hop**
Blessed	Jill Scott	2011	Andre Harris and Vidal Davis	**R&B**
Mama Nem	Tech N9ne	2011	David Sanders II, Watson, Yates	**Hip Hop**
I Love My Momma	E-40	2011	E. Stevens, Mic Conn, and R.O.D.	**Hip Hop**
Look What You've Done	Drake	2011	Graham, Jesse Woodward, Shebib	**Hip Hop**
I'm Sorry	Ne-Yo (featuring Cristal Q)	2008	Shaffer Smith	**R&B**
Maybach Curtains	Meek Mill (featuring Nas, Rick Ross, and John Legend)	2012	Rick Ross, Robert Williams	**Hip Hop**
I Love My Mama	**Lil' Wayne**	**2013**	**Lil' Wayne**	**Hip Hop**

Table 1

Results

Typologies of Black Motherhood

An analysis of the 59 songs (40 Hip Hop songs; 17 R&B songs; 2 songs that represented the Hip Hop and R&B genre) revealed Black motherhood to be based on the following four typologies: (1) Motherhood as Source of Emotional Comfort and Support; (2) Motherhood as Source of Strength and Self-Confidence; (3) Motherhood as Superior to Fatherhood; (4) Motherhood as Teacher and Disciplinarian; and (5) Motherhood Instills Unconditional Endless Love.

There were three aspects of these songs that were particularly noteworthy. For one, one song was first offered by a singing group and the same song was later offered by a solo artist. In particular, the song *"Sadie"* was originally produced by the R&B

group The Spinners in 1974 and later released by the R&B artist R. Kelly in 1993. Second, three songs shared the same title, save for different spellings for the word Mother. These songs were: (1) *I Love My Momma* by Snoop Dogg; (2) *I Love My Momma* by E-40; and (3) *I Love My Mama* by Lil Wayne. Lastly, The Dream and Chris Brown shared the same song title (*Mama*) but the genre of these artists differed. Specifically, The Dream is an R&B artist while Chris Brown is both a Hip Hop and R&B artist. Interestingly, The Dream and Chris Brown both released their songs in 2007.

Further analysis of the songs revealed 27 songs represented only one theme. These songs were: (1) *Mama Said* by The Shirelles; (2) *Tell Mama* by Etta James; (3) *I'll Always Love My Momma* by The Intruders; (4) *Keep Ya Head Up* by Tupac Shakur; (5) *All I Got Is You* by Ghostface Killah; (6) *4 Page Letter* by Aaliyah; (7) *Every Ghetto Every City* by Lauryn Hill; (8) *I Honor U* by Cannibus; (9) *This Woman's Work* by Maxwell; (10) *Survivor* by Destiny's Child; (11) *Momma Knows* by Will Smith; (12) *Look at Me Now* by Young Buck; (13) *Reason* by Nas; (14) *Hey Mama* by Kanye West; (15) *We Ain't* by The Game (featuring Eminem); (16) *Big Brother* by Kanye West; (17) *Dreamin* by Young Jeezy: (18) *Bury Me A G* by Young Jeezy; (19) *Mama* by Chris Brown; (20) *No Hook* by Jay-Z; (21) *Superwoman* by Alicia Keyes; (22) *Momma Can You Hear Me* by Talib Kweli; (23) *3 Peat* by Lil Wayne; (24) *Playing with Fire* by Lil' Wayne; (25) *Blessed* by Jill Scott; (26) *I'm Sorry* by Neyo (featuring Candice Jones); and (27) *Maybach Curtains* by Meek Mill (featuring Nas, Rick Ross, and John Legend).

In addition, 25 songs represented two themes. These songs were: (1) *Sadie* by The Spinners; (2) *Sadie* by R. Kelly; (3) *Dear Mama* by Tupac Shakur; (4) *A Song for Mama* by Boys II Men; (5) *Mama Raised Me* by Master P (featuring Snoop Dogg & Soulja Slim); (6) *Mom Praying* by Beanie Sigel; (7) *Blueprint (Momma Loves Me)* by Jay-Z; (8) *Dance* by Nas; (9) *Motherfather* by Musiq Soulchild; (10) *She's Alive* by Andre 3000; (11) *To My Mama* by Bow Wow (12) *Momma* by Brand Nubian; (13) *Nobody Knows* by Nelly (featuring Anthony Hamilton); (14) *Hate It Or Love It* by The Game (featuring 50 Cent); (15) *Benedicion Mami* by Fat Joe; (16) *I Made It* by Jay-Z; (17) *Mama* by The Dream; (18) *If (My Mommy)* by Saigon; (19) *I'm Only Human* by Rick Ross (featuring Rodney); (20) *Woman* by Raheem DeVaughn; (21) *Mother* by Ashanti; (22) *Mama Nem* by Tech N9ne; (23) *I Love My Momma* by E-40; (24) *Look What You've Done* by Drake; (25) and *I Love my Mama* by Lil Wayne.

Moreover, 4 songs (*Guess Who* by Goodie Mob; *Big Mama* by LL Cool J; *You Only Get One* by Skillz; and *Freedom of Preach* by Ludacris (featuring Bishop Eddie Long) represented three different themes, and 3 songs (*Thanks for my Child* by Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley; *I'm Outstanding* by Shaquille O'Neal; and *I Love My Momma* by Snoop Dogg) represented four different themes.

The "*Motherhood as Source of Emotional Comfort and Support*" theme was based on words and/or phrases related to the ability of mothers to emotionally soothe their children through encouraging words during times of disappointment or distress to make them feel better or rewarding their children when they have behaved well.

A total of 13 songs (22% of the songs) exemplified this theme. These songs were: (1) *Mama Said* by The Shirelles; (2) *Tell Mama* by Etta James; (3) *Thanks for my Child* by

Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley; (4) *I'm Outstanding* by Shaquille O'Neal; (5) *Sadie* by R. Kelly; (6) *A Song for Mama* by Boys II Men; (7) *Every Ghetto, Every City* by Lauryn Hill; (8) *Mama Raised me* by Master P (featuring Snoop Dogg and Soulja Slim); (9) *To My Mama* by Bow Wow; (10) *Nobody Knows* by Nelly (featuring Anthony Hamilton); (11) *Woman* by Raheem DeVaughn; (12) *Mama Nem* by Tech N9ne; and (13) *Look What You've Done* by Drake.

The *"Motherhood as Source of Strength and Self-Confidence"* theme was based on words and/or phrases related to the ability of mothers (or, young mothers) to be strong, to get strength from her children, to rear children to be strong (even though their children are afraid), and to instill strength and self-confidence in her children, even though at times, being a mother is very difficult. A total of 22 songs (37% of the songs) exemplified this theme. These songs were: (1) *Sadie* by The Spinners; (2) *Thanks for my Child* by Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley; (3) *I'm Outstanding* by Shaquille O'Neal; (4) *Sadie* by R. Kelly; (5) *Guess Who* by Goodie Mob; (6) *A Song for Mama* by Boys II Men; (7) *I Love My Momma* by Snoop Dogg; (8) *Mom Praying* by Beanie Sigel; (9) *This Woman's Work* by Maxwell; (10) *Dance* by Nas; (11) *She's Alive* by Andre 3000; (12) *Reason* by Nas; (13) *You Only Get One* by Skillz; (14) *We Ain't* by The Game; (15) *Benedicion Mami* by Fat Joe; (16) *Freedom of Preach* by Ludacris (featuring Bishop Eddie Long); (17) *Dreamin* by Young Jeezy; (18) *If (My Mommy)* by Saigon; (19) *Superwoman* by Alicia Keyes; (20) *Woman* by Raheem DeVaughn; (21) *Mother* by Ashanti; and (22) *I Love my Momma* by E-40.

The "*Motherhood as Superior to Fatherhood*" theme was based on words and/or phrases related to the elevated status of mothers over fathers. Although mothers willingly take on the responsibility to financially care for her children, fathers, make the decision to abandon their family and/or leave their children (as a result, their children never knew them), do not financially support their children, or be actively involved in the lives of their children. A total of 17 songs (29% of the songs) exemplified this theme. These songs were: (1) *Thanks for my Child* by Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley; (2) *Keep Ya Head Up* by Tupac Shakur; (3) *Guess Who* by Goodie Mob; (4) *All I Got Is You* by Ghostface Killah; (5) *I Honor U* by Cannibus; (6) *Mama Raised me* by Master P (featuring Snoop Dogg and Soulja Slim); (7) *I Love My Momma* by Snoop Dogg; (8) *Blueprint (Momma Loves Me)* by Jay-Z; (9) *Big Mama (Unconditional Love)* by LL Cool J; (10) *Motherfather* by Musiq Soulchild; (11) *She's Alive* by Andre 3000; (12) *To My Mama* by Bow Wow; (13) *Hate It Or Love It* by The Game (featuring 50-Cent); (14) *Freedom of Preach* by Ludacris (featuring Bishop Eddie Long); (15) *I'm Only Human* by Rick Ross (featuring Rodney); (16) *Woman* by Raheem DeVaughn; and (17) *Look What You've Done* by Drake.

The "*Motherhood as Teacher and Disciplinarian*" theme was based on words and/or phrases related to the ability of mothers to verbally teach their children the difference between right and wrong (e.g., values; religiosity; spirituality) or physically administer discipline (e.g., spank their children) to their children to prevent them from going down the wrong path or to help their children find and/or remain on the right path.

A total of 19 songs (32% of the songs) exemplified this theme. These songs were: (1) *Sadie* by The Spinners; (2) *I'm Outstanding* by Shaquille O'Neal; (3) *Sadie* by R. Kelly; (4) *Dear Mama* by Tupac Shakur; (5) *Guess Who* by Goodie Mob; (6) *4 Page Letter* by

Aaliyah; (7) *I Love My Momma* by Snoop Dogg; (8) *Survivor* by Destiny's Child;(9) *Big Mama (Unconditional Love)* by LL Cool J; (10) *Momma Knows* by Will Smith; (11) *Momma* by Brand Nubian; (12) *Hate It Or Love It* by The Game (featuring 50-Cent); (13) *I Made It* by Jay-Z; (14) *Mama* by The Dream; (15) *No Hook* by Jay-Z; (16) *Mama Nem* by Tech N9ne; (17) *I Love my Momma* by E-40; (18) *I'm Sorry* by Neyo (featuring Candice Jones); and (19) *I Love My Mama* by Lil Wayne.

The "*Motherhood Instills Unconditional Endless Love*" theme was based on words and/or phrases related to children feeling unconditional and endless love for their mothers due to the many personal sacrifices that their mothers made for them and/or the family. In addition, this unconditional and endless love causes children to honor, admire, and respect their mothers, motivates them to think about ways to move their mother out of poverty, to financially provide for their mothers, to view their mothers as unique and irreplaceable, to appreciate their mothers in life and to wish they were still alive after death.

Thirty-three (34) songs exemplified this theme. These songs were: (1) *I'll Always Love My Momma* by The Intruders; (2*) Thanks for my Child* by Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley; (3) *I'm Outstanding* by Shaquille O'Neal; (4) *Dear Mama* by Tupac Shakur; (5) *I Love My Momma* by Snoop Dogg; (6) *Mom Praying* by Beanie Sigel; (7) *Blueprint (Momma Loves Me)* by Jay-Z; (8) *Dance* by Nas; (9) *Big Mama (Unconditional Love)* by LL Cool J; (10) *Motherfather* by Musiq Soulchild; (11) *To My Mama* by Bow Wow; (12) *Look at Me Now* by Young Buck; (13) *Momma* by Brand Nubian; (14) *Nobody Knows* by Nelly (featuring Anthony Hamilton); (15) *You Only Get One* by Skillz; (16) *Hey Mama* by Kanye West; (17) *Benedicion Mami* by Fat Joe; (18) *Big Brother* by Kanye West; (19) *I Made It* by Jay-Z; (20) *Freedom of Preach* by Ludacris (featuring Bishop Eddie Long); (21) *Big Brother* by Kanye West; (22) *Bury Me A G* by Young Jeezy; (23) *Mama* by The Dream; (24) *Mama* by Chris Brown; (25) *No Hook* by Jay-Z; (26) *If (My Mommy)* by Saigon; (27) *I'm Only Human* by Rick Ross (featuring Rodney); (28) *Momma Can You Hear Me* by Talib Kweli; (29) *Mother* by Ashanti; (30) *3 Peat* by Lil Wayne; (31) *Playing with Fire* by Lil' Wayne; (32) *Blessed* by Jill Scott; (33) *Maybach Curtains* by Meek Mill (featuring Nas, Rick Ross, and John Legend); (34) *I Love my Mama by Lil Wayne*. [Typology of Black Motherhood, Description of Black Motherhood, Lyrical Examples, Songs and Singers that Demonstrate the Typology of Black Motherhood are presented in Table 2].

Typology of Sensitivity	Description of Sensitivity	Lyrical Examples	Songs and Singer/s that Demonstrate the Typology of Black Motherhood
Motherhood as Source of Emotional Comfort and Support	A version of motherhood based on words and/or phrases related to the ability of mothers to emotionally soothe their children through	"I want you to tell mama what you want and I'll make everything all right" "And you took up for me	• *Tell Mama* by **Etta James (1967)** • *A Song for Mama*

	encouraging words during times of disappointment or distress to make them feel better OR rewarding their children when they have behaved well.	when everyone was downin' me" "My mother always thought I'd be a star, But way before my record deal"	by Boys II Men (1997) • *Every Ghetto Every City* by **Lauryn Hill (1998)**
Motherhood as Source of Strength and Self-Confidence	A version of motherhood based on words and/or phrases related to the ability of mothers (or, young mothers) to be strong, to get strength from her children, to rear children to be strong (even though their children are afraid), and to instill strength and self-confidence in her children, even though at times, being a mother is very difficult.	"With you right here with me, I'll have the strength to go on" "You always did understand, You gave me strength to go on" "You taught me strength you gave me guidance, Whenever faith was lost, you were there to find it"	• *Thanks for My Child* by Cheryl "Pepsi" Riley (1988) • *A Song for Mama* by Boys II Men (1997) • *Mother* by Ashanti (2008)
Motherhood as Superior to Fatherhood	A version of motherhood based on words and/or phrases related to the elevated status of mothers over fathers. Although mothers willingly take on the responsibility to financially care for her children, fathers, make the decision to abandon their family and/or leave their children (as a result, their children never knew them), not financially support their children, or be actively involved in the lives of their children.	"Daddy wasn't home so mama raised me" "Momma loved me, pop left me" "Daddy ain't around, prolly out committin' felonies"	• *Mama Raised Me* by Master P (featuring Snoop Dogg & Soulja Slim) (1998) • *Blueprint (Momma Loves Me)* by Jay-Z (2001) • *Hate it or Love It* by The Game (featuring 50 Cent) (2005)
Motherhood as Teacher and Disciplinarian	A version of motherhood based on words and/or phrases related to the ability of mothers to verbally teach their	"You taught me how to care, You taught me how to share (f'real), You taught me how to love and to	• *I Love My Momma by* Snoop Dogg (1999)

		give"	
	children the difference between right and wrong (e.g., values; religiosity; spirituality) OR physically administer discipline (e.g., spank their children) to their children to prevent them from going down the wrong path or to help their children find and/or remain on the right path.	"As a young boy you gave me whoopings to save my life….Cursed me out, to keep me out the streets at night" "I go to work, I don't quit. Mamma taught me this"	• *Big Mama (Unconditional Love)* **by LL Cool J (2002)** • *I Love My Mama* **by Lil' Wayne (2013)**
Motherhood Instills Unconditional Endless Love	**A version of motherhood based on theme was based on words and/or phrases related to children feeling unconditional and endless love for their mothers due to the many personal sacrifices that their mothers made for them and/or the family. In addition, this unconditional and endless love causes children to honor, admire, and respect their mothers, motivates them to think about ways to move their mother out of poverty, to financially provide for their mothers, to view their mothers as unique and irreplaceable, to appreciate their mothers in life and to wish they were still alive after death.**	**"Breakfast was on the table you gave me unconditional love"** **"And you never put no man over me, And I love you for that mommy, can't you see?"** **"Mama always did little things like that, Mama always will know I love her for that"**	• *Big Mama (Unconditional Love)* **by LL Cool J (2002)** • *Hey Mama* **by Kanye West (2005)** • *Mama* **by Chris Brown (2007)**

Table 2

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine whether Black male and female artists in Hip-Hop and R&B discuss motherhood in terms of oppression or empowerment. To

do this, we examined the lyrics of 59 (40 Hip Hop, 17 R&B, and 2 Hip Hop and R&B) songs to determine how Black artists in these genres generally discussed motherhood. Fundamentally, Patricia Hill Collins' Black Feminist Theory was particularly compatible with the goals of this study as this theory highlighted the ways that Black Hip-Hop and R&B artists defined motherhood as well as the value that they placed on this particular dimension of parentage, uncovered the potential oppression experienced by Black mothers, as well as gave greater attention to the salience of Black culture. Earlier in this paper, we presented four questions that were foundational to our study, and in the paragraphs to follow, we will respond to each of these questions.

How Black Male and Female Hip-Hop and R&B Artists Discuss Motherhood

Fundamentally, there are three ways in which Black male and female artists in Hip-Hop and R&B discussed motherhood. First, Black male and female Hip-Hop and R&B artists provided lyrics that highlighted the instrumental (physical) and expressive (emotional) salience of motherhood. In particular, these mothers could be depended on for physical care, emotional comfort, and stable parenting. Second, Black male and female Hip-Hop and R&B artists did not have the same regard (emotional attachment) to their mothers and fathers. Several years ago, Tia Tyree's[49] textual analysis of rap songs revealed Black male artists used positive terms such as "Queen," "Good Woman," "Strong Sista" to describe their mothers. This study built upon Tyree's work by drawing attention to the strength of Black women as well as placing Black mothers who financially support and are actively involved in the lives of their children as superior to Black fathers who abdicate this responsibility. Third, the male and female Hip-Hop and R&B artists' lyrics highlighted the ways in which Black motherhood should be rewarded. In particular, several artists mentioned how they provided their mothers lavish and expensive gifts as tokens of their boundless appreciation and gratitude. This finding lends strong support to Tyree's textural analysis of rap songs in that rappers generally bought expensive homes and gifts for their mothers to express how much they truly appreciated their mother's unconditional love and self-sacrificing support.

How Black Motherhood Is a Marker of Oppression in Hip-Hop and R&B

There were three ways in which motherhood was a difficult experience for Black mothers. First, consistent with the findings offered by Song and Edwards,[50] several artists recognized the financial, emotional, and spiritual hardship on Black mothers who reared their children without help from their child's father. Interestingly, although many of his lyrics have expressed misogyny toward women ("*I Get Around*" and "*How Do You Want It*"), in the song *Keep Ya Head Up*, Tupac Shakur (1999) recognized the

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[49] Tyree 2009, Ibid.
[50] Song and Edwards, 1997, Ibid.

many inherent difficulties associated with single mother parenthood. To support this, Shakur first admitted that his song 'gives a holler to his sisters on welfare,' and that "Tupac cares, and don't nobody else care." Even though the "welfare queen" is a recurring negative stereotype in Hip Hop songs, this Hip Hop lothario recognized the tears in the eyes of these women, who are oftentimes verbally antagonized by the men in their lives and neighborhoods. Another form of oppression that this artist recognized were the many women that are rearing their children alone due to paternal negligence ("You know it makes me unhappy (what's that) when brothas make babies, and leave a young mother to be a pappy"). Essentially, in this song, Shakur did three things: he acknowledged how difficult it is for Black mothers to be both mother and father to their children, he truly empathized with the plight of these women, and he encouraged these mothers to 'keep their heads up,' confident that their lives would improve.

Another form of oppression that our study revealed was the Black mothers who were physically abused by the men in their lives. A closer examination of song lyrics related to this form of oppression against Black mothers revealed these abusive men were not the fathers of their children, but rather, men with whom these women were romantically involved. Although domestic violence was not a major theme in our study, it was mentioned in two songs, namely *"Playing With Fire"* (by Lil' Wayne in 2008) and *"You Only Get One"* (by Skillz in 2005). Interestingly, both of these Hip Hop artists discussed domestic violence within the context of defending their mothers from physical harm. For example, Lyrics such as, "…14, I fought a man for putting his hands on my mamma" (in *"You Only Get One"*) and "…remember when your pussy second husband tried to beat you, remember when I went into the kitchen, got the cleaver…" (in *"Playing With Fire"*) highlight an ugly reality that is present in the lives of many Black mothers as well as the extent to which Black sons would go to protect and defend their mothers from physical harm. Furthermore, in additional to the external stressors with which they must contend (i.e., poverty, racism), domestic violence is an internal form of oppression that simultaneously strips Black mothers of their personal safety and their young Black sons of their childhood innocence. As evident in the aforementioned lyrics, Skillz 'fought a man for putting his hands on his momma' at the tender age of 14 while Lil Wayne was forced to use a kitchen utensil (cleaver) as a weapon to protect his mother from her abusive second husband, who was also his stepfather. Clearly, the actions of these young men placed them in physical danger yet strongly support the literature in which the gratitude and love that Black male rappers have for their mothers unequivocally motivated them to protect their mothers at all cost.[51]

How Black Motherhood Is a Marker of Empowerment in Hip-Hop and R&B

The analysis of the song lyrics revealed four ways in which motherhood was a source of empowerment or strength among Black women. First, the Cheryl "Pepsi"

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[51] Oware 2011, Ibid.

Riley song "*Thanks for My Child*" in 1988 was the first lyrical anthem to celebrate single Black motherhood. Interestingly, the love that this mother had for her child was not contingent on her child's father being a part of her life. In this song, Riley sings: "*And even though my man has left me behind, I don't regret a thing for having you.*" More important, even though she birthed a "love child" (a child born out of wedlock) and was abandoned by her child's father, this single mother had gratitude for the new life with whom she was committed to rear to adulthood. In essence, this child gives its Black mother the "strength to go on." Secondly, the song "*Superwoman*" provided by the R&B singer Alicia Keyes compared Black single mothers to the Marvel-comics "Superman" hero who could easily and successfully manage a multitude of formidable obstacles while appearing calm, cool, and collected. This offering by Keyes is the first and only song to date in which the strength of the Black mother is synonymous to that of a white male superhero that is highly revered in the dominant culture.

Thirdly, in several songs such as "*Hey Mama*" (by Kanye West in 2005), "*I Made It*" (by Jay-Z in 2006), "*Look What You've Done*" (by Drake in 2011), and" *I Love My Mama*" (by Lil Wayne in 2013), Hip Hop and R&B artists openly give credit to their mothers for their international acclaim, fame, and success. Thus, instead of merely thanking their mothers for their unconditional love, financial support, teaching and discipline, as well as the many sacrifices that they made, these artists empower the women in their lives by publicly declaring that they owe their success to them. Lastly, several songs positively depicted motherhood as a source of wisdom and morality. This supports Bush's [52] study in which Black mothers considered spirituality to be a definitive marker of manhood. Songs such as "*Sadie*" (by The Spinners in 1974 and R. Kelly in 1993) and "*I Love My Momma*" (by Snoop Dogg in 1999) recognized that being spiritual is encouraged, revered, and desired among these women.[53] In "*Sadie*" and "*Mama Nem*" (by Tech N9ne in 2011) the artists mentioned that their mothers required them to attend church. The lyrics in songs such as "*I Love My Momma*" (by Snoop Dogg) are not saturated in spiritual nomenclature, such as Christian, "good morals," "moral obligation," and "religious" found in Bush's study, but they depict moral teachings that are oftentimes rooted in scripture. Lyrics such as 'You taught me how to love and to give' (in "*I Love My Momma*") and 'she taught me right from wrong' (in "*Momma*" by Brand Nubian in 2004) highlighted moral teachings that were not exclusively described in religious terms.

How Descriptions of Black Motherhood in Hip-Hop and R&B Have Changed Over Time

There are four ways in which the lyrical conversation regarding motherhood has changed over time. First, there has been a significant increase in the number of Hip Hop and R&B songs in which Black male and female artists praise Black motherhood. Case

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[52] Bush 2000, Ibid.
[53] Chaney 2011, 2008, Ibid.

in point: While 1961 was the first year the all-female group The Shirelles, lauded Black motherhood, since 2000, 42 songs (or 71% of our total sample) have focused on this form of parentage. Second, there has been a steady increase in the number of songs in which Black men specifically state in the title and song lyrics the depth of their love for their mothers. For example, almost 40 years after The Shirelles released their song "Mama Says," Snoop Dogg (one of the originators of "Gangsta Rap") was the first Hip Hop artist to openly proclaim "*I Love My Momma*" in 1999. Since Snoop Dogg offered this public declaration of love for his mother 14 years ago, two Hip-Hop artists, namely E-40 in 2011 with "*I Love My Momma*" and Lil Wayne in 2013 with "*I Love My Mama*" both created songs with the same title. Thus, it seems that within this context, motherhood has transitioned from a general sentimental narrative to a more personal one for most Black male and female Hip Hop and R&B artists. Third, although there was only one Hip Hop song in 2013 related to Black motherhood *("I Love My Momma"* by Lil Wayne), this song provided very little context regarding how this Hip Hop artist was reared, what he gained from his mother's guidance, or his mothers' background or personality. Thus, in addition to expressing love for their mothers, the lyrics of future Hip Hop and R&B songs could potentially provide deeper insight into the personality and psychology of this unique subset of the Black female population.

Lastly, in support of the findings offered by Bush, Chaney, and Tyree,[54] spirituality was tantamount in the lives of Black mothers. What was particularly interesting, however, was how spirituality in these songs morphed over time. For example, in the song "*Sadie"* (provided by the Spinners in 1974 and later by R. Kelly in 1993) the Black mother admonished her child to get "to Sunday school." Thus, it seems that instead of directly speaking about God, religion, or the Bible specifically, Black male and female Hip Hop and R&B artists took an alternate route to spirituality by discussing the values that are generally encouraged in religious institutions and that help them to be successful in their adult lives. Case in point: In the song "*Survivor"* by the Hip Hop and R&B group Destiny's Child, these women acknowledged that they refused to castigate ("diss") an individual that caused them public emotional grief because their 'mama taught them better than that.' Thus, it seems that relying on God, prayer, faith, and hope were used individually and in tandem to help these Black men and women to successfully deal with obstacles, remain focused, and be successful in life.

Limitations of the Current Study

There were two limitations of our study. For one, our focus on Black artists in Hip Hop and R&B limits the generalizability of the findings in this study to Black male and female artists who represent other music genres (i.e., Alternative, Blues, Country, Gospel, or Pop). For the example, the song "*I Remember Mama*" and "*No Charge*" by the Black Gospel artist Shirley Caesar was excluded from our analysis because our focus

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[54] Bush 2000; Chaney 2008a, 2008b, 2011; Tyree 2009, Ibid.

was on Hip Hop and R&B songs and their lyrics. Although this song was a musical outlier, in this song, Caesar held very fond memories of her mother and frequently sang she remembered "Mama in a happy way." Furthermore, that the overwhelming majority of the songs were representative of the Hip Hop genre further limits the generalizability of our findings. Secondly, as the majority of the songs analyzed were created by Black male sole-artists or groups (50 songs or 85%), this makes it difficult to generalize the findings of our study to Black females in Hip Hop or R&B who only provided a small amount of songs (9 songs or 15%) for our analysis. Lastly, the songs that were analyzed in this study essentially provided a snapshot of Black motherhood by a particular artist in time. In other words, as the majority of artists only provided one song related to Black motherhood, this makes it difficult to examine how these artists' views on Black motherhood may have remained stable or changed over time.

In spite of these limitations, however, this study builds on the work of previous scholars related to Black motherhood[55] and provides a strong counter narrative to the negative representation of Black motherhood originally offered by Moynihan several decades ago. In particular, instead of viewing Black motherhood as a banner of shame and oppression, these songs reveal that, even in light of multiple challenges, Black mothers emotionally comfort and support their children, instill strength and self-confidence in their children, are highly regarded by their children, are strict teachers and disciplinarians that help their children become responsible adults, and demonstrate unconditional love for their children which their children return to them.

Directions for Future Research

There are four ways that future scholars can build upon and expand the findings that were outlined in this study. First, future research can more closely examine how Black male and female Hip Hop and R&B artists discuss the counterpart of Black parenthood, namely Black fatherhood. Although several songs presented in this analysis briefly touched on the unavailability of many Black fathers in the lives of their children, future work in this area may reveal a level of Black male involvement that is not generally seen in the mass media nor the academic literature. Second, future research can explore how other genres of music besides Hip Hop and R&B discuss Black motherhood. Additional work in this area would reveal the similarities and/or differences between the themes related to Black motherhood featured in this paper juxtaposed against those in other forms of music such as Alternative, Blues, Country, Gospel, or Pop genres. Third, scholars may wish to explore how childhood is discussed in Hip Hop, R&B, and Hip Hop and R&B songs. This could possibly highlight if and how disciplinary methods have changed over time, plights, and the role of the artists' parents in their childhood. Lastly, future research can explore how non-parent caregivers (i.e., grandparents, uncles, aunts, and family friends) are discussed in

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[55] Chaney 2011, Ibid; Elliott and Aseltin 2013, Ibid; Fouquier 2011 Ibid; Oware 2011, Ibid; Song and Edwards 1997 Ibid; Tyree 2009, Ibid.

multiple music genres. This could support or refute recent literature that discusses the role of non-parent caregivers and how it is discussed differently and similarly in music compared to the role of biological parents.

Conclusion

Given the salience of motherhood for many Black women, it is our hope that the findings in this study encourages the highlighted artists to create more songs that give greater attention to this form of parentage, as well as motivate a larger number of Hip Hop and R&B male and female artists in these and other genres to do the same. Furthermore, the findings of this study beg future scholars to contribute to the growing dialogue on the various forms of support to Black mothers as well as how they are perceived by their children. Although the stereotypicality advanced by Moynihan's[56] national report introduced the assumption that Black motherhood was an oppressive burden to women and the children in their care, the 40 Hip Hop and 17 R&B lyrics provided in this study provide a strong counter narrative to this claim. Even though Black mothers lack the financial, practical, and emotional support that is generally enjoyed by white women, and must deal with the inherent difficulty of coping with poverty and racism,[57] the lyrics of these songs provide resounding proof that Black mothers are a lot stronger than society gives them credit. In spite of a myriad of challenges, Black women are a source of emotional comfort and support for their children, instill strength and self-confidence in their children, are viewed as superior to fathers by their children, are steady teachers and disciplinarians, and show unconditional love for their children, and in return, motivate their children to feel and demonstrate unconditional love for them. In sum, Black motherhood is a symbol of meaning, satisfaction, empowerment, and respect within Black women, the Black family and the Black community, more broadly.

This is article 1 of 2

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[56] Moynihan 1965, Ibid.
[57] Song and Edwards 1997, Ibid.

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Curricular Goals, Music and Pacing: The Case Study for Hip Hop Music in Children's Educational Television

Creshema R. Murray and Cynthia Nichols

As an answer to the McCollum and Bryant (2003) charge for scholars to use the pacing index that they created to measure the pace of current children's programs, this paper examines the use of Hip Hop music in a children's television show, Hip Hop Harry, and the relationship that this show has with the eighty-five shows that were analyzed in McCollum and Bryant's initial study. Hip Hop Harry is an Emmy award nominated show on The Learning Channel, which prides itself on using Hip Hop culture and music as a medium to educate preschoolers from diverse backgrounds. Through content analysis, the paper highlights the curriculum goals presented in eight of the show's episodes, reveals the pacing index of the show, and exposes the difference between traditional curriculum-based programming and the use of the Hip Hop format of curriculum-based programming as a tool to educate children.

There is little debate that television is a vehicle for a variety of messages and that children, in some form, can and are learning from television viewing[1]. However, what children learn, and whether it evokes positive or negative reactions or effects, is up for debate. When reading about the role of television in young children's lives, a multitude of literature exists that condemns television for young children due to the potential negative effects[2]. However, many scholars believe that television can be beneficial to children, and not enough research has focused on the benefits of educational television[3]. Shalom Fisch[4] states, "Far less attention has been paid to the positive effects that educational television programs can hold." If television is indeed a medium through which children learn violence or persuaded to act and think differently,[5] then this same medium can also be used to encourage mental development and engage children in educational lessons.

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[1] Brain R. Clifford, Barrie Gunter, Hugh M. Culbertson and J. McAleer, *Television and Children: Program Evaluation, Comprehension, and Impact*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1995).

[2] Jane M. Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Jerry Mander, *Four arguments for the Elimination of Television*, (New York: Morrow, 1978); Frederick Zimmerman and Dimitri A. Christakis, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study of National Data," *Pediatrics and Adolescents in Medicine* 159, (2005) 619-625.

[3] Jennings L. Bryant and others, *Effects of Two Years' Viewing of Blue's Clues,* (Tuscaloosa: Institute for Communication Research, University of Alabama, 1999).

[4] Shalom M Fisch, "*Vast Wasteland or Vast Opportunity? Effects of Educational Television on Children's Academic Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes*," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. ed. Jennings Bryant, and Dolf Zillmann, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002), 397-426.

[5] Craig A. Anderson and Brad J. Bushman, "*The Effects of Media Violence on Society*," *Psychology* 295, no. 5564 (2002), 2377-2379. Jeffry G. Johnson, Patricia Cohen, Elizabeth M. Smailes, Stephanie Kasen, and Judith S. Brooks. "Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior during Adolescence and Adulthood," *Science* 295, (2002). 2468-2471.

Since children are exposed to an array of mass media every day, many parents are cautious about the kind of media their children are subjected to and often screen their children's exposure. Unfortunately, not everything that is popular with kids is beneficial for them, nor can parents control every aspect of their child's mediated environment. This can result in a battle of wills between what the parents deem appropriate, and what children deem acceptable[6]. For example, in 2012, the most popular program for children ages 6-11 was *American Idol*[7]—a program that, although extremely popular, does not necessarily have any educational benefits or provide kid-friendly music. Viewers of all ages enjoyed the program, however, *American Idol's* intended audience was young children and no curricular lessons were present.

Children are very perceptive, keen to popular music, media, and culture that they have been inundated with throughout their daily lives. Because of this, they desire and ask for the same trends and music that adults do—just put on some Beyoncé music in a group of kids and watch what happens[8]. Children learn from their environment and take cues from older family members to help them cue in to what they find enjoyable, fun, and cool. Educational programs must be developed to not only entertain children and use references from their environment, but to also teach them valuable life lessons. These educational programs, also known as *edutainment*, are not just curricular-based entertainment for kids, but they are also extremely profitable for the television industry.[9] New shows and products are constantly being developed, licensed, and promoted in an effort to vie for market share in a multi-billion dollar industry.[10]

Children's Television Programming

For young children, television is as an educational tool that can teach them essential social, cognitive, and affective cues that they will eventually need to develop[11]. Whether it is a violent crime drama or a cartoon, kids will learn from the information presented on the screen. As former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson aptly noted, "All television is educational. The only question is: what does it teach?"[12] Even though there are numerous critics that report that television is not educational in a positive way

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[6] Juliet B. Schor, *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture,* (New York: Scribner, 2004).

[7] Nielsen Media Research, *YTD Rankers - 6-11,* (2008).

[8] Schor, Born to Buy.

[9] Alison Alexander and James Owers, "The Economics of Children's Television," in *The Children's Television Community,* ed. J. Alison Bryant (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007), 57-74.

[10] Joy Tashjian and Jamie Campbell Naidoo, "*Licensing and Merchandising in Children's Television and Media,*" In *The Children's Television Community*, ed. J. Alison Bryant, (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007), 165-187.

[11] Gordon L. Berry, "The Medium of Television and the School Curriculum," in *Children and Television: Images in a Changing Sociocultural World,* ed. Gordon L. Berry, and Joy Keiko Asamen (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 103-113.

[12] John C. Condry, *The Psychology of Television,* (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1989), p.85.

for children,[13] because it hampers children play[14] and could lead to violence,[15] there is a vast amount of evidence that shows educational television is beneficial to youth, specifically at-risk ones.[16] Therefore, it is essential to create television programs that not only teach essential social cues, but also constructs identity for children and engages them in educational discourse.[17] Educational programs in children's television host content that involves actions, ideas, character portrayals, and models that can help children develop pro-social behavior as well as problem-solving skills. [18] In environments with low parental interaction or socioeconomic status, the use of television as an educational tool, provides children with exposure to new experiences that may not otherwise be readily available.

November 10, 2014 marked the 45th anniversary since the first broadcast of *Sesame Street,* one of the most successful children's television programs of all time. This curriculum-based show was built on the concepts of encouraging flexible thinking and teaching children skills that will prepare them for the future.[19] *Sesame Street* was the first educational program for children to be produced with systematically developed curriculum for children while using state-of-the-art production equipment and techniques.[20] One technique that *Sesame Street* incorporated into the program was the use of music as a teaching tool—each song was created to fulfill specific educational curriculum. Although multiple types of musical genres have been used in the production of *Sesame Street,* it's generally known for its melodic classics such as its theme song or Kermit the Frog's lamentations of being green. [21] This ambitious curriculum was initially designed to prepare inner-city children for school by engaging preschoolers in intellectual skills; teaching them flexible-thinking skills; helping them develop creative problem-solving skills, as well as encouraging them to develop social relationships.[22] Additionally, when the program first aired in 1969, the multiracial cast,

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[13] Jane M. Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why our Children Don't Think;* Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television;* Zimmerman and Christakis, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes"

[14] Marie Winn, *The Plug-in Drug: Television, Children and the Family,* (New York: Viking, 1977).

[15] Jeffry G. Johnson, Patricia Cohen, Elizabeth M. Smailes, Stephanie Kasen, and Judith S. Brooks. "*Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior during Adolescence and Adulthood.*" *Science* 295, (2002). 2468-2471

[16] Zimmerman and Christakis, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes"

[17] James A. Anderson and Milton E. Ploghoft, "Children and Media in Media Education," in *Children and Television: Images in a Changing Sociocultural World,* ed. Gordon L. Berry, and Joy Keiko Asamen (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 89-102.

[18] Berry, "The Medium of Television and the School Curriculum"

[19] Dan Anderson, "Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 557, (1998), 24-38.; Gerald Lesser, *Children and Television: Lessons from Sesame Street* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

[20] Dan Anderson, Jennings Bryant, Alice Wilder, Angela Santomero, Marsha Williams, and Alisha M. Crawley, "Researching Blue's Clues: Viewing Behavior and Impact," *Media Psychology* 2, no. 2 (2000), 179-194.; S Ball and G. A. Bogatz, *The First Year of Sesame Street: An Evaluation* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services, 1970).

[21] Michael Davis, *Street Gang: The Complete History of* Sesame Street (New York, Viking, 2008).

[22] Anderson, "Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron"; Charlotte F. Cole, Beth A. Richman and Susan K. McCann Brown, "The World of Sesame Street Research," in "*G" Is for "Growing": Thirty*

urban setting and the jaunty, catchy tunes gave *Sesame Street* a unique feel and sound that reached beyond the white middle class.[23] Although initially intended for urban youth, this highly researched curriculum has aided in school-readiness at all socio-economic levels.[24] Longitudinal studies have shown *Sesame Street* to "exert a significant effect on children's academic skills and social behavior, both in the United States and abroad."[25] Indeed, children who watch the show early in life, did significantly better in school as a teen, were less aggressive, and were more likely to read for leisure.[26] *Sesame Street,* through proven research and literature, is indeed a powerful and entertaining educational tool.

Another popular and innovative children's television show hit the airwaves in 1996: *Blue's Clues*. This groundbreaking program was designed to teach preschoolers problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. [27] Unlike the majority of children's programs on the air at the time, however, *Blue's Clues'* key motive was not merely entertainment and profitability.[28] Rather, much like *Sesame Street*, it sought to engage and educate children by presenting challenging content based on a strict curriculum and provide educational tools that helped to develop their young minds.[29] The show encouraged active participation from the audience, and presented hands-on, age-appropriate experiences,[30] all while providing a thinking-skills curriculum. One unique aspect to the show—that may have influenced its popularity and impact—is that Nickelodeon aired the same show for five consecutive days, thus repeating the lesson to children multiple times—a tactic that led to an increase in audience size with each additional airing.[31] The repetition it provided allowed children a greater likelihood of retaining the information that was presented in the show.[32] The success of *Blue's Clues*

Years of Research on Children and Sesame Street ed. Shalom M. Fisch and Rosemarie T. Truglio (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001), 147-179.; Lesser, *Lessons from Sesame Street.*

[23] Michael Davis, *Street Gang: The Complete History of Sesame Street*

[24] Shalom M.Fisch, Rosemarie T. Truglio, and Charlotte F. Cole, "*The Impact of Sesame Street on Preschool Children: A Review and Synthesis of 20 Years' Research,*" *Media Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1999), 165-190.; Cole, "The World of Sesame Street Research"

[25] Fisch, "The Impact of Sesame Street on Preschool Children," p.185.

[26] Aletha C. Huston, Dan R. Anderson, John C. Wright, Deb L. Linebarger, and K. L. Schmitt. "Sesame Street Viewers as Adolescents: The Recontact Study," *in "G" Is for "Growing": Thirty Years of Research on Children and Sesame Street*, ed Shalom M. Fisch and Rosemarie T. Truglio (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001).

[27] Anderson, "Researching Blue's Clues"; Bryant, *Effects of Two Years' Viewing of Blue's Clues*

[28] Alexander, "The Economics of Children's Television"; Aletha C. Huston, John C. Wright, Ellen Wartella, Mabel L. Rice, Bruce A. Watkins, Toni Campbell and Richard Potts, "Communication More Than Content: Formal Features of Children's Television Programs," *Journal of Communications* 31, no. 3 (1981), 32-48.

[29] Bryant, *Effects of Two Years' Viewing of Blue's Clues*

[30] Anderson, "Researching Blue's Clues"

[31] David S. Bickham, Aletha Huston, and Mare Schmidt, "Attention, Comprehension, and the Educational Influences of Television," in *Handbook of Children and the Media,* ed. Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage., 2011), 113-138.

[32] Bryant, *Effects of Two Years' Viewing of Blue's Clues;* Bickham, "Attention, Comprehension, and the Educational Influences of Television"

provides superb evidence that when children's television is created with "knowledge of child development, has a systematic curriculum, and is designed with a research-based understanding of how children use and understand television, it can be a powerful and positive influence."[33]

Television is a significant educator among young children. When educational content is used, it can be credited in helping with child development, teaching reading and thinking skills, suggesting pro-social behavior, as well as developing problem-solving skills.[34] Despite evidence to the contrary, television's critics and naysayers have been sleeping on all of the positive educational content that has been circulating for more than a quarter of a century.[35] Shows such as *Sesame Street* and *Blue's Clues* are just a two examples of how television has been used to spark excitement in young children while teaching them skills that are potentially invaluable to their future success. However, one thing that most current edutainment is not known for is its advancement in music. The music in most current children's television programs are almost a default to the type of music that *Sesame Street* initially created—melodic and simple with a jaunty beat. Although time and culture have changed since 1969, the music of children's television has not.

Hip Hop Harry

One show that has successfully been merging educational television with curricular goals and Hip Hop culture is the program *Hip Hop Harry*. Once on The Learning Channel's *"Ready, Set, Learn"* educational time block (now in syndication), it is only one example of a slew of new educational programs created to engage, entertain, and fulfill the educational and informational needs of children in underrepresented and minority groups.[36] Programs such as *Hip Hop Harry, Ni Hao, Kai Lan*, *Signing Time, Dora the Explorer* and *Go, Diego, Go!* all place cultural elements from underrepresented and minority groups in the narrative and educational plotlines. By applying these cultural elements, it provides children in underrepresented and minority groups a vehicle for learning that would not be available otherwise. Because of this, a critical examination of the current state of children's educational programming is essential in staying abreast of the ever-changing television and popular culture. Without an understanding of the

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[33] Anderson, "Researching Blue's Clues," p. 192-193.

[34] Anderson, "*Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron*"; Bickham, "Attention, Comprehension, and the Educational Influences of Television"; Fisch, "The Impact of Sesame Street on Preschool Children"; Donald H. Miechenbaum, and Lorraine Turk, "Implications of Research on Disadvantaged Children and Cognitive Training Programs for Educational Television," *Journal of Special Education,* 6 (1972), 27-41.

[35] Johnson, "*Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior*"; Zimmerman, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes"

[36] J. Cory Allen, "*The Economic Structure of the Commercial Electronic Children's Media Industries*," in *Handbook of Children and the Media*, ed. Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 477-493.

effects of edutainment—positive or negative—there can be no collaboration between communication scholars and the media industry.

Hip Hop Harry is a Hip Hop music centered, children's educational television program. Unlike other edutainment centered shows, which generally use music from nursery rhymes, *Hip Hop Harry* uses the popularity of Hip Hop music as a vehicle to educate, inform, enlighten, inspire, and encourage children to explore, create, and learn in a positive environment.[37] As the first edutainment series to incorporate Hip Hop culture into the plot, character, and spectacle of the show, *Hip Hop Harry* is a highly engaging program that focuses on teaching preschool-aged children valuable life lessons based on academics through dancing and rhyming.[38]

On each episode, children flock to Hip Hop Central, the after-school community center that serves as a haven for boys and girls of different ethnicities, cultures, and social classes. It is at Hip Hop Central where numerous positive life-lessons, pro-social values, as well as curricular lessons are taught. These educational and entertaining ideas are interwoven into the plot and presented to the children through the lens of Hip Hop culture. The Hip Hop framework of dance, art, music, and language—all of which help educate the children on issues dealing with mental, physical, and emotional growth—are incorporated into every episode and allows children to more easily identify with and understand the curricular lessons in the program. Four overarching curricular goals are achieved in every episode of *Hip Hop Harry*. Viewers of the show see presentations of: (a) social and emotional skills; (b) cognitive and educational skills; (c) physical and health skills; and (d) artistic and creative skills.

Claude Brooks created *Hip Hop Harry* in 2006 as "an alternative way to help kids learn" and a way to show kids learning could be fun. Brooks' inspiration for creating the show originated when he noticed rhyming to be "a precursor for literacy" and the call and response nature of Hip Hop to be "an organic way for kids to retain new ideas."[39] It was this realization that led Brooks to create a show that incorporated rapping and Hip Hop culture into the program, by connecting with children through urban music and dance while simultaneously exposing them to systematic educational curriculum. *Hip Hop Harry's* format and popularity has provided numerous children a fresh approach to learning through song, dance, and music—a ubiquitous and essential part of life. Even though some people have criticized the negative effects of Hip Hop music on American culture,[40] Brooks took an innovative leap at contradicting that view by combining television and Hip Hop music as a primary text for educating youth. By doing so, Brooks extends the grasp to educate children who watch the show in a manner that was not possible before the two media crossed paths and merged.

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[37] *Hip Hop Harry,* Directed by Brian Campbell, DVD (TTPI Hip Hop Harry Productions, 2006).

[38] D. Hammonds, "Hip Hop Harry! A Kid-Friendly Rapper Stars in a New Educational Series for Kids." 2007. Retrieved April 9, 2008, from
http://www.familymagazinegroup.com/entertainment/story_Hip+Hop+Harry!.html

[39] Hammonds, *Kid-Friendly Rapper*, p. 1

[40] William E. Perkins, *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

Hip Hop Music

As many people can attest, music fulfills many physical, psychological, mental, and emotional human needs.[41] Although there are numerous genres that affect individuals differently, music has the ability to connect people, communicate emotion, and educate the masses. In every generation, people use music to develop new and unique identities by borrowing from past generations, creating new sounds, and adding updated twists to out of date melodies.[42] One genre of music that does just that is Hip Hop. Hip Hop is a young, urban, and modern form of music that was created by African Americans in the 1970s and has become extremely popular in mainstream society.[43] It was originally created as a form of cultural art used to express many of the sentiments and experiences of people within the African American community. This art emulates intrinsic forms of expressions in the African and African American cultures through dance and music.

This "postmodern popular art"[44] began as more than just listening to music or jamming to rhymes; it was created to challenge the traditional ideals of music by creating elaborate beats, melodic lyrics, and dance music to be appreciated through movement.[45] In short, the music relies on an intricate weaving of sound and dance.[46] Unlike other forms of music, Hip Hop "communicates aspiration and frustration, community and aggression, creativity and street reality, style and substance"[47]—making it the poetry of a group that has been disregarded because of race and social class.[48] Hip Hop music is "the most startlingly original and fastest growing genre in popular music."[49] One reason is that Hip Hop is not just about music, but a culture that exudes style, art, rhythm, and dancing, and has the ability to connect with people of all ages, races, and creeds.[50] The energetic sound of Hip Hop takes pieces of life from popular culture and works to aid in providing "the common cultural background necessary for

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[41] Elijah Mickel and Christopher Mickel, "Family therapy in transition: Choice Theory and Music," *International Journal of Reality Therapy* 21, (2002), 37-40.

[42] Perkins, *Droppin' Science.*

[43] Henry A Rhodes, "The Evolution of Rap Music in the United States," *Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute's Curricular Resources*, Curriculum Unit 93.04.04 (1993). Retrieved, August 30, 2009 from http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/guides/1993/4/93.04.04.x.html

[44] Jon Pareles, "How Rap Moves to Television's Beat," *The New York Times*, Jan 14, 1990.

[45] Richard Shusterman, "The Fine Art of Rap," *New Literary History* 22, no. 3 (1991), p.613-632.

[46] Greg Dimitriadis, "Hip Hop: From Live Performance to Mediated Narrative," *Popular Music* 15, no. 2 (1996), 179-194.

[47] Russell Simmons and Nelson George, *Life and Def: Sex, Drugs, Money, and God* (New York: Crown, 2002), p.5.

[48] Terri M. Adams and Douglas B. Fuller, "The Words Have Changed but the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music," *Journal of Black Studies* 36, (2006): 938-957.

[49] Pareles, *The New York Times*, p. 1.

[50] Dimitriadis, "Hip hop: Performance Narrative"; Simmons, *Life and Def*

artistic creation."[51] The lyrics in Hip Hop tell stories and ask for engagement from the audience, which serves as a community. It is a form of oral story telling that has been credited with encouraging narrative forms and word play, and promoting consumers to listen to the message in the lyrics over just dancing to the beat.[52] Currently, there are few, if any, children's shows that incorporate the melodic rhythm, pace, or context of Hip Hop music and dance moves as a central form of edutainment in the same way as *Hip Hop Harry*. As such, it is essential to incorporate Hip Hop music into educational television to fill the needs of children of different cultural backgrounds.

Within Hip Hop, a sub-genre labeled as "knowledge rap" exists in which lyricists combine their role as artist and poet with the role of realist and teacher. Scholar Richard Shusterman states that knowledge rap "insists on uniting the aesthetic and cognitive"[53] with artistic meaning and value. Knowledge rap's goal of educating the listener, allows educational creativity in the lyrics, which allows the listeners to have numerous interpretations and perspectives on the music.[54] Knowledge rap may have potential in educational television, for it incorporates educating the listener as well as entertaining them. In addition, the rhythmic nature of the music may engage listeners who might normally disconnect from it.

Like other genres of music, Hip Hop has many critics that dislike the recent direction in which the music has shifted (e.g. pop, country, rock). Critics feel that faster-paced lyrics, which focus on gaining material possessions and trivializing women, is giving society negative connotations about Hip Hop, as well as creating false ideals and standards in young African Americans.[55] However, the exotic beats and artistic use of words continues to make this genre of music one of the most popular in today's culture. Additionally, Hip Hop music is creating a shift in the culture of America, where Madison Avenue is now mixing with entertainment and Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop is no longer "black music" but new music, a mainstream culture that is found in television, movies, clothing, and even politics.[56] The consumption of Hip Hop music and culture has led to a transformation of American society and how generations of individuals relate to each other.

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[51] Shusterman, *Fine Art of Rap*, p. 662.

[52] Dimitriadis, "Hip Hop: Performance Narrative."

[53] Shusterman, *Fine art of rap*, p.626.

[54] Dimitriadis, "Hip hop: Performance Narrative."

[55] Adams and Fuller, "Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music"; Brown, Veda, "Guiding the Influence of Hip Hop Music on Middle-School Students' Feelings, Thinking, and Behaving," *The Negro Educational Review* 57, no. 1-2 (2006), 49-68.; Monk-Turner, Elizabeth and D'Ontae Sylvertooth, "Rap Music: Gender Difference in Derogatory Word Use," *American Communication Journal* 10, no. 4 (2008), p.1-12; Tricia Rose, *The Hip Hop Wars* (New York: Civitas Books, 2008).

[56] Steve Stoute, *The Tanning of America: How Hip Hop Created a Culture that Rewrote the Rules of the New Economy* (New York: Gotham Books, 2013).

Pacing in Television

Understanding the messages that are presented on television requires viewers, both adults and children alike, to decipher various audio and visual cues from the content of the program.[57] These cues are presented as different edits and changes designed to frame not only the unique scenes, but also to highlight certain messages. The rate at which these scenes, characters, and activity changes is known as pacing, a technique used in television programming to gain and retain audience attention.[58] The pace of a show can vary from slow to fast, and is connected to the number of changes to a new scene, changes in a familiar scene, auditory changes, changes in the characters, as well as the length of active music, talking, and motion.[59] Pacing has been credited with allowing more messages to be presented during single episodes by presenting more information through continuous changes in movement, sights, and sounds.[60]

The use of pacing in children's television programming has been a heavily debated topic among scholars for the last thirty years. Scholars have indicated that the faster the pace, the more attention will be paid to it, for the rapid changes in a program can catch the attention of the viewer. However, research has also indicated that young children retain fewer curricular lessons at a fast pace than at a slower pace.[61] One of the major criticisms of rapid pacing in children's programming stems from children not being able to remember what they have seen and being burned out from cognitive overload.[62] Critics of *Sesame Street* wrote that the show used too much time in overloading children with unnecessary scenes, did not provide enough time in presenting substantial education, and that the nature of the show did not allow children to process the content due to the influx of rapidly moving images.[63] One criticism of pacing in children's educational television is that shows using this technique "are based on the premise that such formats encourage shallow or passive processing, reduces mental effort, and short attention span."[64] However, some of the most outspoken critics about special effects and pacing in television do not have any scientific proof that fast pacing is detrimental or even that educational television shows employ fast pacing

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[57] Annie Lang, Seth Geiger, Melody Strickwerda, and Janine Summer, "*The Effects of Related and Unrelated Cuts on Viewers' Memory for Television: A Limited Capacity Theory of Television Viewing*," *Communication Research* 20 (1993), 4-29.

[58] Huston, "Formal Features of Children's Television Programs"

[59] John C. Wright, Aletha C. Huston, Rhonda P. Ross, Sandra L. Calvert, David Rolandelli, Lee Ann Weeks, Pouran Raeissi, and Richard Potts, "Pace and Continuity of Television Programs: Effects on Children's Attention and Comprehension," *Departmental Psychology* 20, no. 4 (1984), 653-666.

[60] McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

[61] Cynthia Nichols, "How Fast Can They Learn? Developmental Differences in Information Acquisition of Educational and Narrative Content Through Pacing and Distance" (PhD diss., The University of Alabama, 2010).

[62] Jerome Singer, "The Power and Limitations of Television: A Cognitive-Affective Analysis," in *The Entertainment Functions of Television*, ed. Percy H. Tannenbaum (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1980), 31-65.

[63] Miechenbaum, "Implications of Research on Disadvantaged Children"

[64] Wright, "Pace and Continuity of Television Programs," p. 653.

techniques to convey messages to children.[65] However, it is unknown whether Hip Hop music will affect the pace of the program.

In 2003, researchers McCollum and Bryant developed a pacing index that established a formula for examining and coding television shows. It was through this that a pacing index for 85 of the top-rated United States children television programming were examined, and significant differences in the pacing of curriculum-based children's programming and non-curriculum based children's television programming were revealed—shows that are geared towards educational curricula being slower than shows for children that are geared solely towards entertaining. The study also indicated that critics of *Sesame Street* who argued that the show was full of fast-paced images and sounds, were incorrect in their assumptions, and indicated that curriculum-based shows do not generally employ fast pacing. The authors encouraged fellow scholars to continue where they left off in the examination of the pacing of scenes, images, and audio in children's television programming through the pacing index they established through their work.

Method

As an answer to the McCollum and Bryant[66] charge for scholars to use the pacing index they created, this paper examines the unique children's television show, *Hip Hop Harry*, and the relationship that it has with the 85 shows that were analyzed in the McCollum and Bryant study. However, instead of an in-depth comparison of all the shows from the study, the authors will only compare the *Hip Hop Harry* show against the curriculum-based programs. This paper also examines *Hip Hop Harry's* educational goals, as well as explores whether a children's program can use Hip Hop music and dance to employ its curricular goals to succeed in conveying its message that education can be entertaining and fun.

In order to effectively look at pacing in *Hip Hop Harry*, the authors will use the following to guide the collection of the data and help define the parameters of the content analysis:

RQ1: How does *Hip Hop Harry* incorporate curricular goals into each show?

H1: The overall pacing of *Hip Hop Harry* is faster than other curriculum-based shows.

H2: Since *Hip Hop Harry* uses the rhythmic sounds of Hip Hop as the main vehicle for its message, the program will present more auditory changes and active music than other children's shows.

H3: Since *Hip Hop Harry* uses the rhythmic motions and dance of Hip Hop as the main vehicle for its message, the program will present more active motion than other children's shows.

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[65] McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

[66] McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

Content Analysis

Content analysis was chosen as the method for this study, because as other research has indicated, it provides scientific data that can be generalized to the larger population,[67] and would be the best fit for the parameters of this research. The shows used for this exploratory study came from the eight available *Hip Hop Harry* videos produced by The Learning Channel.

Unit of Analysis

Two units of analysis existed for this exploratory research. First, the sample for the content analysis was selected by examining every "problem segment" that existed within *Hip Hop Harry*. A "problem segment" was defined as one or more characters that had conflict or an issue develop that was resolved through communication during the episode. The segments varied in complexity from a shorter segment with a simple resolution to a lengthier segment with more complicated problems. There were between two and six segments per video, yielding a population of thirty-four problem segments over eight episodes.

The problem segments were then reviewed for several variables including: character descriptions, lesson themes, ethnicity of the characters, number of individual versus group dances or songs, the song message type-whether the message was interpersonal, personal, a lesson to teach a child how to do something, or a moral lesson, the type and reason for dancing on the show, who introduced the problem and how, as well as who resolved the problem and how. Cumulative episode data as well as individual problem segment data was collected through dichotomous and categorical response options. The majority of the variables were descriptive data that helped establish the trends in the show.

The second part of this study examined the pacing of *Hip Hop Harry*. The sample for this was determined by modeling the coding after McCollum and Bryant's study,[68] which examined the pacing of all children's television shows. Since this paper did not recollect the data regarding other shows, the coders emulated the formulas and collection process presented in the research. In order to determine the pacing for *Hip Hop Harry*, the authors chose 5-minute segments from each of the eight episodes and used the mean of these to determine the true pacing index of the show. Although analyzing the pace of the entire show would be best, the authors decided to emulate McCollum and Bryant's study as closely as possible, and looked at the 5-minute segment to show a representation of the shows pacing. In order to get a better representation of the show, the authors decided to code different 5-minute segments of the show, 0-5 minutes, 5-10 minutes, 10-15 minutes, and 15-20 minutes. Each portion of

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[67] Harold H Kassarjian, "Content Analysis in Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research* 4, no. 1 (1977) 8-18.

[68] McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

the show was then present in the analysis, and gave a more accurate portrayal of *Hip Hop Harry.*

Training and Reliability

Two graduate students were used to code the data. Training sessions were conducted to educate both the coders on the variables and refine the coding schema. After the training sessions established the consistency of the schema, a subset of 20% of the problem segments was used to test for reliability. The Holsti[69] generalized formula calculated the inter-coder agreement on each coding category, yielding overall reliability of 95.76% within the problem segment content analysis. After the satisfactory reliability was obtained, the problem segments were analyzed for trends and descriptive information.

For the coding of the show's pace, a sample coding was conducted to ensure that the coders had a comprehensive understanding of the parameters of the study. Coding occurred in real time to examine duration as well as frequency measures. The segments were watched as many times as necessary until the coders were positive all the variables were accounted for and coded correctly. Discussion between coders was permitted. Based off McCollum and Bryant's study,[70] the coders examined a 5-minute segment from each of the eight available episodes for seven unique elements: unrelated camera shifts, related camera shifts, camera cuts, auditory changes, active motion, active talking, and active music. A subsequent intercoder reliability check yielded the following kappas for the data: unrelated camera shifts, 1.000, related camera shifts, .873, camera cuts, .931, auditory changes, .975, active motion, .990, active talking, .931, and active music, 1.000. The mean kappa for this intercoder test was .952.

Results

Hip Hop Harry prides itself on being an educational show that entertains and educates based on four overarching curriculum goals. Table 1 shows the overall results for the content analysis of the eight episodes. The table presents all eight episodes and the 30 problem segments within each episode with lesson themes that support the curricular goals per problem segment. The table indicates that *Hip Hop Harry* not only offers solutions to problems through hip hop music and dance, but also that the curriculum goals of the show are fulfilled in each episode[71]. The curricular goals—(a) social and emotional skills; (b) cognitive and educational skills; (c) physical and health skills; and (d) artistic and creative skills—were met in the episodes by having problem segments touching the subjects of safety, team work, sharing, responsibility, lying, making friends, materialism, politeness, math, reading, science, fairness, learning dance, gaining confidence, embracing difference, strengthening memory, exercising, eating healthy, and manners. In particular, *Hip Hop Harry* placed special emphasis on social

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[69] O. R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969).

[70] McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming."

[71] Hammonds, "Hip Hop Harry! A kid-friendly rapper"

and emotional skills building within the program. Therefore, RQ1 is answered. *Hip Hop Harry* is a curriculum based show, which used various topics to communicate important messages to children.

Problem Segments, Solutions, and Implied Curricular Lessons

Episode	Problem	Problem Title	Lesson Themes		Problem Resolution Through Hip Hop		Curricular Goals Met
			Individual Dance	Group Song	Individual Dance	Group Dance	(1) Social/emotional (2) Cognitive/ Educational (3) Physical/Health; (4) Artistic/Creative
1.2	Exercise is Fitness Fun	Teaching Dance, Exercise, Manners, Safety	0	1	0	1	3,4
1.2	Writing Poems	Reading	1	0	1	0	2
2.1	Stretch	Safety, Exercise	0	0	0	0	3
2.2	Drinking Water	Healthy Eating	0	1	0	1	3
2.3	Wanting to Win	Teamwork	0	1	0	1	1
3.1	I want to learn	Teaching Dance, Embracing Differences	0	0	0	0	1,3,4
3.2	Learning New Dances	Safety, Teaching Dance, Confidence, Embracing Differences	0	1	0	1	1,3
4.1	Shapes of Life	Math, Being Fair, Memory	0	1	0	1	1,2
4.2	Introduce Yourself	Making Friends, Confidence, Embracing Friends	0	1	0	1	1
4.3	Show Me How	Teamwork, Sharing, Making Friends, Politeness, Being Fair, Confidence,	0	0	0	0	1

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		Embracing Differences					
5.1	Let's Share	Teamwork, Sharing, Being Fair, Manners	1	0	1	0	1
5.2	Different Ways to Share	Sharing, Materialism, Politeness, Being Fair, Manners	0	1	0	1	1
5.3	Consequences of Lying	Responsibility, Lying, Politeness, Manners	1	0	1	0	1
5.4	Forgiving a Friend	Teamwork, Sharing, Responsibility, Making Friends, Politeness, Being Fair, Embracing Differences,	0	0	1	0	1
5.5	Teamwork	Teamwork, Responsibility	0	1	0	1	1
6.1	Dad's Birthday	Materialism, Reading	0	1	0	1	1,2
6.2	Words Have Power	Sharing, Politeness, Manners	1	0	1	0	1
7.1	Going on A Picnic	Safety, Teamwork, Making Friends, Materialism, Politeness, Embracing Differences, Healthy Eating	1	0	0	1	1,3
7.2	Share Share Share	Teamwork, Sharing, Responsibility, Politeness, Being Fair, Embracing Differences, Manners	0	1	0	0	1

7.3	Good Manners	Safety, Sharing, Responsibility, Politeness, Being Fair, Healthy Eating, Manners	0	1	0	1	1,3
7.4	Double Dutch Dazzlers	Teamwork, Teaching Dance, Confidence, Embracing Differences, Exercise	0	1	0	1	1,3,4
7.5	Any Kind of Food You Like	Safety, Responsibility, Healthy Eating	0	1	0	1	1,3
8.1	Hand Bone	Materialism, Embracing Differences	0	1	0	1	1
8.2	Shake the room	Politeness, Embracing Differences, Memory	0	1	0	1	1
8.3	Beat Box	Materialism, Embracing Differences	1	0	1	0	1
8.4	Tap Tap Tap	Materialism, Exercise	1	0	1	0	1,3
8.5	Red Means Stop	Responsibility, Reading, Teaching Dance, Memory	0	1	0	1	1,3,4
8.7	Shake Your Maracas	Materialism, Confidence, Embracing Diversity	1	0	1	0	1
8.8	Everybody Jam Along	Teamwork, Materialism, Teaching Dance, Embracing Differences, Memory	0	1	0	1	1,3,4

Table 1

Table 2 highlights the overall difference in the pacing score for the curriculum based television shows, ordered from highest to lowest. This table shows support for

H1. The program with the slowest pace was *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,* with an index of 14.95. The fastest-paced program was *Bill Nye the Science Guy* with and index score of 56.90. It should be noted that the clip of *Bill Nye the Science Guy* that was used for analysis was a very unusual segment due to a video montage being shown during the 5-minute segment[72]. If this video clip montage had not affected the score, *Hip Hop Harry* would have the highest pacing of all curriculum-based shows with a value of 44.83.

Curriculum Based Programs' Pacing Index and Network

Show	Network	Pacing Index
Bill Nye the Science Guy	PBS	56.90
Hip Hop Harry	The Learning Channel	44.83
Gullah Gullah Island	Nickelodeon	37.00
Rupert	PBS	35.55
Arthur	PBS	31.10
Barney	PBS	31.00
Magic School Bus	PBS	28.95
Lamb Chop's Play-Along	PBS	28.70
Allegra's Window	Nickelodeon	28.50
Wishbone	PBS	28.10
Where…Carmen San Diego?	PBS	27.55
Big Comfy Couch	PBS	27.05
Kratts' Creatures	PBS	26.95
Sesame Street	PBS	24.80
Shining Time Station	PBS	23.35
Puzzle Place	PBS	23.10
Blue's Clues	Nickelodeon	21.85
Reading Rainbow	PBS	20.60
Storytime	PBS	15.75
Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood	PBS	14.95

Table 2

Table 3 presents the overall pacing index for the eight shows of *Hip Hop Harry* and the mean of each of the pacing index categories. As the table indicates, the pace of the show ranges from 38.7, at the slowest to 50.05 at its peak. Upon further examination, this indicates that even the slowest *Hip Hop Harry* pace was faster than all other curriculum-based programs, except for *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, and as McCollum and Bryant indicated, this high pacing value might not have been accurate due to a video montage that was selected for coding (2003). Thus, H1 is further supported. However, it

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[72] McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

is important to note, that *Hip Hop Harry* had a highest number of camera edits of all the programs—which influenced the pacing score of the show.

Hip Hop Harry Pacing Index

Episode Name	Time Run (Min)	Camera Cuts	Related Shifts	Un-related Shifts	Auditory Changes	Active Motion	Active Music	Active Talking	Pacing Index
I like to Move	0-5	129	10	29	37	51	48	47	50.05
Fancy Footwork	5-10	97	3	43	35	55	54	22	45.7
You Can Dance	10-15	99	3	43	26	35	22	72	42.9
Making New Friends	15-20	105	25	14	40	67	61	37	49.5
My Favorite Things	0-5	110	25	29	38	21	21	76	43.75
Words Have Power	5-10	107	0	14	33	43	43	55	40.55
Perfect Picnic	10-15	73	15	43	24	32	29	43	37.8
Music Makers	15-20	92	35	43	30	41	46	50	48.45
Mean		102	15	32	33	43	41	50	44.84

Table 3

To further determine the cause of this higher pace, Table 4 presents the pacing index and score for each of the 19 curriculum-based shows and the mean pacing score of the *Hip Hop Harry Shows*. In the general category of camera cuts, *Hip Hop Harry* had a mean of 102 cuts. The show with second highest number of camera cuts was *Rupert* with 80 edits. The program with the fewest number of camera edits was *Storytime* (*n*=1). T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ($t(26) = 6.195$, $p<.001$) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ($\mu=101.50$, $SD=16.04$) were compared to the camera cuts in the other curricular programs ($\mu=42.16$, $SD=24.85$).

In terms of related scene shifts, *Bill Nye the Science Guy* yielded the most related camera shifts (*n*=110), *Lamb Chop's Play-Along* had the fewest number of related camera shifts (*n*=1), and *Hip Hop Harry* had 15 related camera shifts. After the *Bill Nye the Science Guy* outlier was removed, *t*-tests did not indicate any significant differences ($t(25) = 1.496$, $p<.147$) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ($\mu=14.50$, $SD=12.74$) were compared to the related shifts in the other curricular programs ($\mu=8.47$, $SD=7.99$).

Hip Hop Harry had the most unrelated shifts (*n*=32) with the next show, *Bill Nye the Science Guy* had only 7 unrelated camera shifts, and the majority of shows had no unrelated camera shifts. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ($t(26) = 7.917$, $p<.001$) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ($\mu=32.25$, $SD=12.81$) were compared to the unrelated shifts in the other curricular programs ($\mu=2.25$, $SD=7.20$).

In terms of auditory changes, *Hip Hop Harry,* scored had relatively few (*n*=33) as compared to *Blue's Clues,* which had the greatest number of auditory changes (*n*=112). *Hip Hop Harry* dedicated an average of 41% of the show to active music, whereas *Rupert* had active music in 80% of the program. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences (*t*(26) = 2.563, *p*<.017) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows (μ=32.88, *SD*=5.77) were compared to the auditory changes in the other curricular programs (μ=53.80, *SD*=22.56). This does not support H2, indicating that auditory changes occur more often in other curricular programs than it does *Hip Hop Harry.*

In terms of active motion, *Hip Hop Harry* had the second greatest amount of time featuring characters in active motion with 43% of the show; however, *Puzzle Place* had the most amount of the program time (50%) dedicated to active motion. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences (*t*(26) = 5.424, *p*<.001) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows (μ=43.13, *SD*=14.43) were compared to the active motion in the other curricular programs (μ=11.35, *SD*=13.85). Thus, H3 is supported. The active motion in *Hip Hop Harry* is greater than that of other curricular shows.

In terms of active music, *Hip Hop Harry* was extremely close to the mean amount of active music with 41% of the show; however, *Rupert* had the most amount of the active music in the program (80%) and *Reading Rainbow* dedicated to the least amount to active music. *T*-tests did not indicate any significant differences (*t*(26) = 0.293, *p*<.772) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows (μ=40.50, *SD*=14.88) were compared to the active music in the other curricular programs (μ=42.95, *SD*=21.54). This does not support H2, indicating that the amount of active music in *Hip Hop Harry* is the same as other curricular programs.

Many of the programs analyzed by McCollum and Bryant featured a great deal of active talking—16 of the 20 shows had active talking greater than 70% of the time. However, *Hip Hop Harry* had the lowest amount of active talking out of all of the shows presented with active talking only being used by the characters 50% of the time. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences (t(26) = 4.735, *p*<.001) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows (μ=50.25, *SD*=17.71) were compared to the active talking in the other curricular programs (μ=81.85, *SD*=15.26).

Individual Curriculum-Based Programs' Pacing Indices and Scores

Program	Pacing Index	Camera Cuts (n)	Related Shifts (n)	Unrelated Shifts (n)	Auditory Changes (n)	Active Motion (%)	Active Music (%)	Active Talking (%)
Allegra's Window	28.50	33	3	0	70	7	70	98
Arthur	31.10	61	5	2	60	1	28	82
Barney	31.00	60	2	0	63	10	63	90
Big Comfy Couch	27.05	36	6	0	60	19	35	94
Bill Nye the Science Guy	56.90	16	110	7	51	16	57	71
Blue's Clues	21.85	25	2	0	112	3	17	77
Gullah Gullah Island	37.00	65	12	0	80	18	70	94
Hip Hop Harry	44.83	102	15	32	33	43	41	50
Kratts' Creatures	26.95	46	30	0	33	1	70	65
Lamb Chop's Play-Along	28.70	37	1	2	45	0	48	93
Magic School Bus	28.95	58	5	0	83	14	32	77
Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood	14.95	12	3	0	25	5	47	53
Puzzle Place	23.10	17	3	0	60	50	34	97
Reading Rainbow	20.60	46	9	0	39	1	9	87
Rupert	35.55	80	8	0	61	20	80	63
Sesame Street	24.80	29	5	2	25	1	25	95
Shining Time Station	23.35	33	18	0	40	9	43	71
Storytime	15.75	1	24	0	20	0	11	98
Where…Carmen San Diego?	27.55	44	6	0	62	1	61	96
Wishbone	28.10	78	4	0	54	8	18	86

Table 4

Discussion and Conclusions

Using television as a medium for education is essential in keeping children abreast of technology and exposing them to events, images, and scenarios that they may not normally encounter. As America's number one pastime, children spend more than

four hours a day viewing television programming—educational or not.[73] Although *Sesame Street* is by far the most consistent, curriculum-based television show that produces children's educational programming that has been deemed superb; there is always room in the market for more shows—particularly ones that incorporate Hip Hop culture. *Hip Hop Harry* is a good case study to examine how curriculum-based television can incorporate the changing trends of our culture. Not only was the show extremely innovative, *Hip Hop Harry* created a buzz around young consumers all over the United States. Combining elements of popular Hip Hop music and dance with education elements allows young viewers—specifically young urban viewers—to fully immerse themselves into the program. Using Hip Hop music as a vessel for learning provides younger viewers with situations that they are more likely to face in the classroom or on the playground.

Although the ideal scenario for children watching television is for kids to be actively engaged with parents while watching it, this cannot always be accomplished. Whether a child is a latchkey kid, the parent is otherwise engaged, working, or perhaps not even present in the home, it is difficult to create the ideal watching scenario in every home. Even if a parent watches with the child, explains the lesson, and reiterates it throughout the day, they cannot always be an active participant. This is an unrealistic scenario—particularly in urban and lower income group where both parents are often working and unable to actively participate. Therefore, television must be sensitive to the needs of these children and incorporate popular styles of music and cultural cues that will create a better connection for learning. Children's television must use the curricular advancements that programs such as *Blue's Clues* and *Sesame Street* has offered, but also incorporate more ethnic cultural cues and push the musical boundaries. By doing so, it will create more active engagement for underrepresented, urban, and minority children.

Children naturally want to watch what entertains them, and often watch what an older sibling or family member has on. Some programs—particularly educational ones—may not seem as enticing to a young child as a program intended for an older counterpart. However, an educational program that is exciting, fun, and offers cultural cues—such as a giant rapping bear—that they understand may with a child in ways that a calm program, like *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, would not.[74] For many children, a breakdancing bear with a cool, fun, and funky demeanor would not only be enjoyable to watch, but would also be extremely relatable as urban cultural references are presented in the program. By using these popular cultural references and making learning an active experience, the program creates an environment that is enticing to young children. By pulling from Hip Hop culture, music and dance, a child may

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[73] Rachael Cox, Helen Skouteris, Daniela Dell'Aquila, Lousie L. Hardy, and Leonie Rutherford, "Television Viewing Behavior among Preschoolers: Implications for Public Health Recommendations," *Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health* 49, no. 2 (2013), p. E103-E111.

[74] James F. McCollum and Jennings Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming," *Mass Communication and Society* 6, no. 2 (2003), 115-136.

become so engaged with the show that at the end of it, they could easily join in with singing and dancing along with the characters as they rap about their love for learning.

In comparison to some of the more traditional curriculum based children's television programming, *Hip Hop Harry* follows all of the intended educational goals per show and adds flavor and fun for children of all ethnicities. Like its counterparts on networks devoted to producing educational programming, *Hip Hop Harry* uses pacing techniques to garner children's attention and to present multiple messages. It could be argued that the faster pace of *Hip Hop Harry* may be directly related to the Hip Hop culture itself, however, further analysis suggests this pace was more likely due to the way the program was edited rather than the music and culture of Hip Hop itself. If this is true, then it stands to be argued that there is no real reason for Hip Hop music and culture to not be incorporated into children's television programming. Rather, it should be encouraged in order to connect with underrepresented and minority children, providing them with social cues to which they can relate. Additionally, if the program was edited to reduce the frenetic nature of the camera cuts and unrelated shifts, then the program could allow for greater retention of its educational content.

The consumption of Hip Hop music and culture has led to a transformation of American society—that allows for more open, inclusive and culturally diverse messages and frameworks.[75] So it is no surprise that this can also be seen in children's television. While shows such as *Barney* and *Blue's Clues* use nursery rhymes, with soothing melodies, *Hip Hop Harry* uses upbeat rhythms that engage the listener to become involved and drawn into the music.[76] This upbeat rhythm could, potentially, draw in an audience of young viewers that would not be interested in other educational programs because of its connection to the Hip Hop culture. Programs that are intended to connect with urban youth are not only beneficial to children of all socio-economic levels, but to less advantaged children as well. If a program can connect with urban children, and present entertainment they can identify with, it may be able to expose them to a variety of curricular lesson that can not only benefit them, but entertain them as well.

Even though other children's television programs are traditional in their use of slower paces, *Hip Hop Harry* utilizes multiple camera cuts and unrelated scenes shifts to add a unique element of excitement to the show. These angles and shift not only speed the pace, but add interesting visual elements as well. However, in terms of using more auditory changes, the directors of the show likely understand that they must give children time to process the educational messages, which can be seen in the comparable pacing elements to other shows. Although there does seem to be more active talking and auditory change in other curriculum-based shows, *Hip Hop Harry* has a higher pace in terms of camera cuts and actual action of the characters. It would be interesting to see which elements are the most consequential in children's attention and retention of information.

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[75] Stout, *Tanning of America*

[76] Sandra L. Calvert, "Impact of Televised Songs on Children's and Young Adults' Memory of Verbally Presented Content," *Media Psychology* 3 (2001): 325-342.

By making the pace of the music more natural to the young urban viewer, it might be easier for them to connect with and attend to—as their orienting reflexes may be more attuned to the faster pace of Hip Hop music. The very nature of the music in *Hip Hop Harry* tells stories and asks for engagement from the audience, which serves as a community. The call and repeat nature of the lyrics not only emulates the Hip Hop music, but also traditional educational television.[77] Its lyrics, rhythm, and rhyme are a form of oral story-telling that creates additional emphasis on encouraging narrative forms and word play, and promoting children to listen to the message in the lyrics over just dancing to the beat.[78] The very nature of the Hip Hop music in *Hip Hop Harry* may allow the program to break through the static in the lives of urban viewers and emphasize the education message of the program itself.

However, one limitation to consider is that *Hip Hop Harry* is now in syndication and is no longer producing live or current shows. Although this does not affect the results of the pacing index, the nature of the syndication may indicate that it no longer reaches its urban audience. Because of this, the positive impact that the program could have on urban youth may never be fully understood or felt. Another factor to consider to truly understanding the pacing of *Hip Hop Harry* would be how individuals process rap and Hip Hop. Although the methods may be similar to how individuals learn through music, the pace and rhythmic patterns in rap and Hip Hop may affect how well an individual may retain and recall information. Thus, it is essential for children's programming to integrate Hip Hop pace, music, and culture into the shows to entertain and educate a segment of the population that children's programming does not normally attend. The combination of the pace and the curricular lessons give youths an opportunity to learn social cues that might not normally be available to them. The fact that the program is off the air only indicates a great need for educational programming specifically geared toward the urban youth.

Pacing is an excellent way to gauge how a show compares to other shows, and is a good benchmark for further research. However, the pacing model lacks depth for qualitative insight regarding the influence of Hip Hop on educational television and more in-depth research should be conducted. Additionally, pacing does not explain how well the child observing the show will retain information. Several factors, such as social influence, socioeconomic status, education level, parental interaction, creativity, and problem solving abilities should all be considered when determining how well a child might learn from the program. In addition, consideration should include the examination of children's television shows that are based off music and dance in relation to other shows that focus on words and images. Another possible area of research is to examine the actual level on enjoyment for children when watching shows with a faster pace than shows with a slower pace.

McCollum and Bryant's challenge by examining pacing and the show's popularity, as well as update the pacing index to determine if the developments of new

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[77] Anderson, "Researching Blue's Clues: Viewing Behavior and Impact"
[78] Dimitriadis, "Hip Hop: Performance Narrative"

television programs are faster paced than shows from a decade before. Much research has examined this area in the past; the potential opportunities for research on this subject are endless. Although this study does examine a different type of program, other shows and media, such as edutainment games on the Internet, have yet to be explored—particularly in connection to the world of Hip Hop. In the future, further research should explore how the tanning of America is influencing children's music, culture, and educational television. Although *Hip Hop Harry* is somewhat reminiscent of a big purple dinosaur, the program intrinsically treats kids differently. It does not pander to them, but rather speak to them in a language and nature that they can understand, connect with, and appreciate.

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Hip Hop Culture in a Small Moroccan City

Brian Seilstad

This paper explores Hip Hop culture by tracing its development from the global level through the Arab world to finally its manifestation in Morocco. Hip Hop culture is defined broadly as a wide range of artistic expressions—rap, graffiti, breakdancing, DJing, etc.—and also a mind-set or way of life. The focus on the Moroccan context starts at the national level, pointing out some of the key artists, issues Moroccan Hip Hop faces, and how this has been explored by scholars of Hip Hop. The paper focuses on an ethnographic exploration of Hip Hop culture in Ifrane, a small Moroccan city. An analytic approach suggested in Patti Lather's 1991 book Getting Smart informs and expands the paper particularly by privileging the emancipatory power of Moroccan Hip Hop, creating a nuanced view of the impact of Hip Hop on the lives of youth in this small community. Finally, the paper employs a self-reflexive stance to critically view the author's own position in the research project in order to name some of the challenges and contradictions of a white male American doing Hip Hop research in the Moroccan context.

I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco from 2005-2007. During that time, I worked in a small town, Amizmiz, near Marrakesh that I came to see as "normal" in terms of infrastructure, schools, and people. Of course, I am using the term "normal" here ironically as "normal" is one of language's powerful tools for the creation and maintenance of arbitrary, and often oppressive, cultural values and practices.[1] When I moved back to Morocco to work as Al Akhawayn University (AUI) in 2010, I lived in another small town near Fes named Ifrane. During my second year teaching, I started a service-learning program that brought youth from the university and local public high school together to work on English learning activities through project-based group work.[2] Through this collaboration, I got to know Mehdi Essiffi, one of the high school's emergent leaders. While we did not have many deep conversations during this initial period, I noticed that Mehdi and his friends were a bit less "normal" than the students I had known in Amizmiz in that they wore big baggy clothes and skateboarded around town. Throughout the several years of the program, our relationship grew as Mehdi took on various leadership roles, even staying involved in the program after his Spring 2013 graduation from high school.

In fact, at the final program of the Fall 2013 semester, Mehdi presented a video entitled *Hip Hop in Ifrane* featuring a short introduction to Hip Hop and then examples

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[1] Pierre Bourdieu, "On the Family as a Realized Category," *Theory, Culture & Society* 13, no. 3 (August 1, 1996): 19–26, doi:10.1177/026327696013003002; Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London; Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1990); bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 28.

[2] Brian Seilstad, "Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating a Department-Wide Service-Learning Program for English Language Learners in Morocco," *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 18, no. 1 (2014): 229–63.

of breakdancing, rapping, and DJing from local youth.[3] Intrigued, I asked Mehdi if he would be interested in developing this further for a fortuitously planned conference on popular culture in North Africa and the Middle East at AUI.[4] He agreed. Although neither of us, at the time, were aware of some of the prevailing theories and techniques in ethnographic research,[5] we were primarily concerned with talking to local Hip Hop artists and documenting their work. As such, we were amateur researchers in this field but developed an ad hoc ethnographic method that was admittedly not as systematic as it could have been but nevertheless sought to capture as much of the Hip Hop culture of the small town as possible. Thus, in the following weeks, we spent time discussing the basic parts of the project, which included two main aspects:

(1) Data at the local level in Ifrane with Mehdi as the main gate-keeper and organizer, including:

- Conducting semi-structured interviews with local rappers, breakdancers, graffiti artists, DJs, et al.—basically anybody involved in the Hip Hop scene in Ifrane.[6] These interviews were not audiorecorded, but detailed notes were taken during the interview, and in many cases there were ample opportunities for informal follow-up questioning.
- Collecting documentary evidence of Ifrane's Hip Hop from photos, film, social media, etc. These were recorded through multiple means—my digital camera, Mehdi's smartphone, and other local artists sharing their work through social media.

(2) Background research done about Hip Hop in the global, MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, and especially Moroccan contexts with me as the main investigator but with Mehdi's and other youths' guidance, including:

- Conducting a literature review about prominent Hip Hop theories
- Conducting a literature review about Moroccan Hip Hop
- Watching documentaries about Hip Hop globally and especially in Morocco
- Viewing Hip Hop art widely but with a focus on popular Moroccan artists

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[3] The full video can be seen here: *Shta.mpg*, accessed October 24, 2014, http://www.mediafire.com/watch/g4kceanze96c69w/Shta.mpg.

[4] IISMM, "Appel À Comunication: 7th International Conference: 'Popular Culture in the Middle East and North Africa', Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane (Maroc)," *Accueil*, October 8, 2013, http://iismm.hypotheses.org/4426.

[5] Jan Blommaert, *Ethnographic Fieldwork: A Beginner's Guide* (Bristol ; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2010); Mike A. Crang and Ian Cook, *Doing Ethnographies* (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2007).

[6] Again, we were quite unaware of the many issues with interviews and were inclined to take them more or less at face value. For example, we would have been greatly assisted if we had been aware of the following: Mats Alvesson, *Interpreting Interviews*, 1st ed. (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010); Charles L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); C. Jerolmack and S. Khan, "Talk Is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy," *Sociological Methods & Research* 43, no. 2 (May 1, 2014): 178–209, doi:10.1177/0049124114523396.

- Watching interviews with Moroccan Hip Hop artists, mostly rappers, on popular media
- Reaching out to Hip Hop youth outside of Ifrane, especially young women, through Facebook and other means

Despite Mehdi's fracturing his collarbone in a snowboarding accident in December, the result of this was a conference presentation that located Ifrane within the larger world of Hip Hop from the U.S. to the Moroccan scenes. For this paper, the conference itself and the discussions around our presentation are another part of the data and analysis.

This paper describes and analyzes the results of this process by applying a social constructionist technique summarized by Gergen[7] of Patti Lather's 1991 book *Getting Smart*.[8] This starts with creating a realist version of the data. Then, a critical framework is used to approach the issue from a politically invested viewpoint. Next, alternative interpretations are explored through deconstruction to uncover areas of marginality and oppression.[9] Finally, the exploration turns to self-reflexivity as a final phase of locating the researcher(s) and peeling back any illusions of objectivity. Lest this approach seem to veer into explanatory paralysis, Lather's work centers emancipation as a key goal of post-modern research. This paper takes the same approach to Hip Hop itself and Hip Hop research as a fundamentally emancipatory act; indeed, this paper seeks to "ex-center"[10] the discourse about Hip Hop in Morocco.

The reason to employ such an approach is that studies into Moroccan Hip Hop have tended towards the reductive and what Lather calls "theory-imposing" that runs counter to emancipatory research.[11] For example, one common debate is whether Moroccan Hip Hop has been coopted by the government.[12] In this argument, Moroccan Hip Hop is made a pawn of the government and/or marginalized to the point of insignificance. Although this phenomenon may be part of the picture, I suggest that this creates a highly limiting binary with which to study Hip Hop. In fact, in Morocco, the relationship between the government and associated forces—the Makhzen—is deeply woven into life and even survival, as the Moroccan proverb says: "The Makhzen

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[7] Kenneth Gergen, *An Invitation to Social Construction*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 2009), 134.

[8] Patti Lather, *Getting Smart* (London: Routledge, 1991).

[9] John D. Caputo, ed., *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996).

[10] Lather, *Getting Smart*, 33–35.

[11] Ibid., 61.

[12] A. Boum, "Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization of Hip-Hop Music in Morocco," in *Contemporary Morocco: State, Politics and Society under Mohammed VI*, ed. D. Zisenwine and B. Maddy-Weitzman (London: Routledge, 2013), 161–77, https://www.academia.edu/1803587/Youth_Political_Activism_and_the_Festivalization_of_Hip-Hop_Music_in_Morocco; Karima Laachir, "Contemporary Moroccan Cultural Production: Between Dissent and Co-Optation," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 25, no. 3 (September 1, 2013): 257–60, doi:10.1080/13696815.2013.824375; Cristina Moreno Almeida, "Unravelling Distinct Voices in Moroccan Rap: Evading Control, Weaving Solidarities, and Building New Spaces for Self-Expression," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 25, no. 3 (September 2013): 319–32, doi:10.1080/13696815.2013.820130.

are like fire; if you get too close, you burn, but if you get too far away, you freeze." In addition, I believe that too many studies focus only or primarily on interviews with famous male Moroccan rappers or analysis of their songs.[13] Moreover, academic ethnography about Moroccan Hip Hop needs development, and Bhat[14] is a good step in this direction but certainly only a beginning. Thus, this paper seeks to deconstruct this binary and contribute to this field through Lather's approach by bringing at least two elements into higher relief: (1) the voices of common, that is, not (or not yet) famous, Moroccan Hip Hop artists from a small town and (2) my experience as a Hip Hop researcher and collaborator with Mehdi.

Towards the "Real": Global Hip Hop Travels to Morocco and Ifrane

Hip Hop is 'arguably the most profound, global popular cultural movement of the late 20th/early 21st century'.[15] This movement started in the 1970s in the U.S. and specifically in the Bronx and Harlem of New York City from influences including the cultures of Barbados, Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and North American blacks.[16] Scholars have further developed the roots of Hip Hop by connecting deeper African cultural elements (e.g. Dogon, Yoruba, etc.) with Hip Hop's use of "word power": on the one hand and rhythm/the beat and the body in dance on the other as the raw attractive elements of Hip Hop.[17] As a result, this new art form quickly gained in popularity in the U.S. as a medium that was both aesthetically interesting and capable of transmitting important messages about the artist's worldview, including sharp critiques of the society.[18] The impact of Hip Hop in the U.S. has been significant but also contentious involving, among many issues, serious debates and disagreement between the commercialized/hyper-sexualized and the politically conscious versions of Hip Hop.[19]

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[13] Anisha Bhat, "Hip Hop Highways: Mapping Complex Identities through Moroccan Rap" (Pomona College, 2014); Boum, "Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization of Hip-Hop Music in Morocco"; Moreno Almeida, "Unravelling Distinct Voices in Moroccan Rap"

[14] Bhat, "Hip Hop Highways: Mapping Complex Identities through Moroccan Rap"

[15] H. Samy Alim and Alastair Pennycook, "Glocal Linguistic Flows: Hip-Hop Culture(s), Identities, and the Politics of Language Education," *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 6, no. 2 (2007): 93.

[16] Halifu Osumare, "Global Hip-Hop and the African Diaspora," in *Black Cultural Traffic: Crossroads in Global Performance and Popular Culture*, ed. Harry Justin Elam and Kennell Jackson (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 266–88; Robert F. Thompson, "Hip-Hop 101," in *Droppin Science*, ed. William Perkins, First Edition (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 210–19.

[17] Halifu Osumare, *The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip-Hop: Power Moves*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[18] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, Reprint edition (New York: Picador, 2005).

[19] Osumare, *The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip-Hop*

SMALL MORROCAN CITY

This short introduction uses the word Hip Hop, but the term and practice itself is quite amorphous. Many scholarly studies focus on rap as the focal point in Hip Hop,[20] privileging the spoken word and the message being delivered, but it must be stressed that Hip Hop is a 'cultural phenomenon' that involves a spectrum of forms including rap, graffiti, break dancing, journalism, and activism.[21] Hip Hop can even be described as a way of life for those individuals who are not actively involved in the production of Hip Hop but only the consumption or emulation of it through music, dress, or even a certain style of living or thinking.[22]

One key element of Hip Hop that pervades and motivates the movement is the interplay between competion and collaboration, most often manifested in the 'clash' seen between two (or more) rappers, b-boys/girls, DJs, and so on. What is important is that, while these clashes may often be genuine expressions of animosity between Hip Hop artists, they are often constructed and constructive spaces that bring inspiration to the artists and, thus, keep the Hip Hop movement alive and strong.

Globally, Hip Hop has grown exponentially as the latest African-American export as other cultures and particularly youth have seen Hip Hop as an ideal way to convey their message in their specific circumstances.[23] Scholars have traced these connections to virtually every corner of the world[24] and documentaries such as *The Hip Hop Years* or *How Hip Hop Changed the World* show how this movement started and spread.[25] Despite the fact that these global borrowings come from an American source,

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[20] H. Samy Alim, *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006); Alim and Pennycook, "Glocal Linguistic Flows"

[21] Gwendolyn D. Pough, "Do the Ladies Run This…? Some Thoughts on Hip-Hop Feminism," in *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*, ed. Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier (Boston: Northeastern, 2003), 233.

[22] Russell A. Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 26.

[23] Russell White, "Sign of a Black Planet: Hip-Hop and Globalization," in *Issues in Americanisation and Culture*, ed. Jude Davies, Neil Campbell, and George McKay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 163–77.

[24] Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, eds., *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip-Hop and the Globalisation of Black Popular Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 2006); Sujatha Fernandes, *Close to the Edge: In Search of the Global Hip Hop Generation* (London: Verso, 2011); Marame Gueye, "Urban Guerrilla Poetry: The Movement Y'en a Marre and the Socio-Political Influences of Hip Hop in Senegal," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 6 (2013): 22–42; Tony Mitchell, ed., *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA*, 1st ed. (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan, 2002); Caroline Mose, "Swag'and'cred': Representing Hip-Hop in the African City." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 6, no. 3 (2013), http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol6no3/6.3-8-Mose.pdf; Mwenda Ntarangwi, *East African Hip Hop: Youth Culture and Globalization* (University of Illinois Press, 2009); Shani Omari, "Hip Hop Music as a Youth Medium for Cultural Struggle in Zanzibar.," *Journal of Pan African Studies* 6, no. 3 (2013), http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol6no3/6.3-9-Omari.pdf; Koen Stroeken, "Immunizing Strategies: Hip-Hop and Critique in Tanzania," *Africa* 75, no. 04 (2005): 488–509; Marina Terkourafi, *The Languages of Global Hip Hop* (A&C Black, 2010).

[25] NoRecordSnobs, "How Hip-Hop Changed The World - Part 1/3," November 18, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwfdlC795ag&feature=youtube_gdata_player; Firehouse SoundLabs, "The Hip Hop Years Part 1," January 6, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhrSlOa2bsA&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

it must be stressed that there is a need to historicize the development of each country's adaption from uncritical copying to creative ownership of the Hip Hop culture.[26] Even if many of the themes of American Hip Hop are the same, including exclusion and marginalization, in the global context each story is unique.

Among these global particularities are how Hip Hop culture builds its own identity and struggles to become an authentic form in a new context. In general, successful efforts to achieve this have involved an intense focus on two connected points 1) expressing the Hip Hop artist's lived experience and especially strong connections to the local as represented in the 'hood', and 2) transmitting an important message to the audience. These two elements are key, but global Hip Hop artists may also seek to bolster their bona fides by emphasizing the do-it-yourself nature of their art, collaborating with other artists and especially Americans, and even focusing on their own notions of blackness.[27]

MENA/Arab Hip Hop

Hip Hop has taken hold and has produced a significant culture in the MENA region and specifically the "Arab" countries from Morocco to Yemen.[28] Documentaries such as *Broken Records*,[29] *Lyrics Revolt*,[30] and *961 Underground: The Rise of Lebanese Hip Hop*[31] in addition to research focused on the region broadly[32] or more specific areas such as Palestine[33] or Tunisia[34] bring to the fore the history of Hip Hop in a complex region.

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[26] Osumare, *The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip Hop*.

[27] White, "Sign of a Black Planet: Hip -Hop and Globalization," 166.

[28] I use "Arab" as a convenient term for the swath of countries from Morocco to Yemen in the Middle East and North Africa. These countries adopt Arab identity, Arabic language, and possibly Islam as primary parts of their identity, despite the fact that many other cultures, languages, and religions exist. Israel, Turkey, and Iran are not included in this definition.

[29] Broken Records, "Documentary: Broken Records," February 17, 2011, http://vimeo.com/20067860.

[30] Dj Lethal Skillz, "961 Underground: The Rise of Lebanese Hip Hop (Documentary DVD)," April 13, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sah0rI2mXsY&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[31] gulffilmfest, "LYRICS REVOLT," April 1, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COBuYSAOlGM&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[32] N. Gana, "Rap and Revolt in the Arab World," *Social Text* 30, no. 4 113 (December 1, 2012): 25–53, doi:10.1215/01642472-1725784; U. Kahf, "Arabic Hip Hop: Claims of Authenticity and Identity of a New Genre," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 19, no. 4 (2007): 359–85.

[33] Ela Greenberg, "'The King of the Streets': Hip Hop and the Reclaiming of Masculinity in Jerusalem's Shu'afat Refugee Camp," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 2, no. 2 (September 1, 2009): 231–50, doi:10.1163/187398509X12476683126428; S. Maira and M. Shihade, "Hip Hop from '48 Palestine: Youth, Music, and the Present/absent," *Social Text* 30, no. 3 112 (September 1, 2012): 1–26, doi:10.1215/01642472-1597314; David A. McDonald, "Carrying Words like Weapons: Hip-Hop and the Poetics of Palestinian Identities in Israel," *Min-Ad: Israeli Studies in Musicology Online* 7, no. 2 (2009): 116–30.

[34] Ilyana Ovshieva, "Stomping for Tunisia: Liberation, Identity and Dignity in Tunisian Rap Music," *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 36–54, doi:10.1163/18739865-00503003.

The origin of this region's Hip Hop often is located in Palestine, which has received a good deal of scholarly attention due to being a contested area where Hip Hop artists' lived experience is truly one of daily conflict with the Israeli occupation.[35] Indeed, struggle against oppression, whether external or domestic, is one of the key themes of Palestinian Hip Hop and Arab Hip Hop in general due to the fact that Palestine does not hold a monopoly on oppression in the region.

However, Hip Hop in the Arab countries has some other specific issues worthy of closer consideration. These include the role of religion and Islam because some Muslims take issue with certain art forms such as singing or dancing that form a core part of Hip Hop culture. On the other hand, some Hip Hop artists in this region draw inspiration from Muslim-American rap and specifically groups related to the Five Percenters.[36] In addition, the issue of Arabic itself as a medium of expression in Hip Hop is complex as each country has its own Arabic dialect(s) that Hip Hop artists may use in addition to the possibility of using Standard Arabic or other indigenous or colonized languages. Finally, the role of women in Hip Hop is more complex in a region where women's rights are a locus of struggle for many; indeed, this point will be taken up more fully later in the paper.

Moroccan Hip Hop

As this paper focuses on the Moroccan context, it is important to shed light on the general history and key aspects of Hip Hop in Morocco. Again, while much of the scholarly focus has been on rap, it must be stressed that the world of Hip Hop in Morocco involves many other elements including breakdancing, graffiti, DJing, dress, and use of language, especially Dareeja (Moroccan Arabic). Moroccan Hip Hop has received a good deal of attention as evidenced by documentaries such as *I Love Hip Hop in Morocco*,[37] *Casanayda!*,[38] a feature documentary on Al Jazeera,[39] and the film *All I Wanna Do*.[40] These films and documentaries tend to focus on the main male players in the rap scene such as Bigg, Ash-Kayne, Fnaire, Muslim, or Casa Crew while shedding some small light on females such as Tendresse, Soultana and her group Tigress Flow, or the plight of the beginning artist in *All I Wanna Do*. Locally, programs such as Ajial, Medi1, Hit Radio, or Jota TV regularly feature Hip Hop artists, again with a focus on

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[35] McDonald, "Carrying Words Like Weapons."

[36] Michael Muhammad Knight, *The Five Percenters: Islam, Hip Hop and the Gods of New York* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007).

[37] Josh Asen and Jennifer Needle, *I Love Hip Hop in Morocco*, 2011, http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/i_love_hip_hop_in_http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/i_love_hip_hop_in_moroccomorocco.

[38] Farida Benlyazid and Abderrahim Mettour, *Casanayda!*, 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRrT1zRzmFQ&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[39] Al Jazeera Documentaries, *Rap Marocain Sur Al-Jazeera Tv - Part 1*, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQafGmn81CI&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[40] M. Medina, *All I Wanna Do*, 2011.

male rappers, such as Muslim,[41] Dizzy Dros,[42] Masta Flow of Casa Crew,[43] Master Flow,[44] Caprice, Would Cha3b,[45] Chaht Man,[46] or Sa3er Man,[47] or the most prominent female rappers Tendresse[48] and Soultana.[49] Unfortunately, these interview shows tend to ignore or give little voice to other Moroccan artists such as the internationally award-winning breakdancing crew Lhiba KingZoo with its famous solo breakdancer Lil Zoo[50] or DJ Key/Khalid Douache, one of the pioneers of Moroccan Hip Hop, or the countless other artists in the graffiti, beatboxing, etc. scenes. In short, it must be stressed that, in Morocco as in other countries, there are many established Hip Hop artists, and everyday new artists are forming; thus, the field is always growing in a cycle of creativity and tension between those Hip Hop artists who succeed and then struggle to maintain their authenticity in the eyes of the up-and-comers.

Through these documentaries and media interviews with prominent Hip Hop artists, one can gain a sense of some key issues facing Moroccan Hip Hop. One of the first points the artists make is the self-made origins of the Hip Hop movement in Morocco and how many artists started 10-15 years ago simply by writing their lyrics, sharing with friends and family, and then moving to recording their tracks in their home and distributing cassettes for free.[51] Today, the presence of YouTube and digital media makes this easier,[52] but many artists still start by recording tracks in their home using personal computers and some, including Dizzy Dros, prefer to stay independent

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[41] AKAPROD, "Muslim 2013 Sur Ajial 2M TV A Propos de Almarhoum," December 17, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GF1bZCDVzMA&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[42] TvELaiounCity, "Dizzy DROS Sur Ajial 2M TV," March 13, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L15OJzg0ENo&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[43] TheMeBoob01, "Masta Flow 2011 New À Medi1,Masta Flow 2011,Rap Marocain 2011,Top Chat Maroc: Www.L3azz.Com," January 20, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhXbz_7NsEw&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[44] KtwoAlbertcity, "Master Flow Sur L'émission: AJIAL (HD)," March 9, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZdX8eiq53M&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[45] HIT RADIO, "CAPRICE ET WOULD CHA3B DANS LE MORNING DE MOMO SUR HIT RADIO - 12/11/13," November 12, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cLFMX7Cb70&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[46] attawri, "Chaht Man @AJIAL," March 8, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-um9svKdQM&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[47] Moncif AISSAOUI, "Sa3er MAN @AJIAL 2M TV, Tremplin Boulevard 2010," March 9, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TcavoJ_sd8k&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[48] Roim6, "Tendresse Sur Ajial 2M Dimanche 19 Juin 2011," June 20, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ipr-BRHB7dg&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[49] my min, "Soultana on Jota Tv Part 1 (EXCLUSIVE)," December 14, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5MnRx7dC3s&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[50] Salif Traore, "Biographie de BBOY Lil Zoo (Maroc)," *Bboy Bgirl Africa*, 2013, http://www.bboybgirlafrica.com/interview-de-bboy-lil-zoo-maroc/.

[51] MedRadio Maroc, "Muslim Avec Lamiaa El Bekri Sur Med Radio," May 18, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcQg0Et0hPc&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[52] Boum, "Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization of Hip-Hop Music in Morocco."

through these self-production methods.[53] Another issue with Moroccan Hip Hop is the criticism it faces from the Moroccan community that range from pointing out that Hip Hop is a foreign import to accusing Hip Hop artists of promoting immorality. The reactions to this by the Hip Hop artists themselves range from simply ignoring the criticisms to addressing it head on in song (e.g. Dizzy Dros' song 'Men Hna'),[54] accusing the accuser of simply not understanding or trying to understand, or taking a more historical view. Masta Flow, as an example of this last approach, pointed out in an interview on the Medi1 program *No Shame* (بدون حرج) that Gnawa, which is now considered an important part of Morocco's patrimony, was once considered a borrowing from Sub-Saharan Africa.[55] In addition, rappers sometimes face criticism that their work is morally objectionable from the perspective of language and sex, but the rappers, for example Dizzy Dros, turn this on their head and talk about how the language used is real, that of the street, and to deny that is to deny a linguistic reality.[56] Specifically, the use of the term "Nigga" (عزي) creates tension for many listeners, but most rappers explain the use of this term in a positive and identity-forming framework rather than that of racism. For example, Dizzy Dros emphasizes that this is a term of affection between friends in his neighborhood.[57] That said, racism against blacks is certainly a part of Moroccan society, and the popular magazine *Zamane* recently explored this issue, tracing the history of slavery and racial segregation in Morocco.[58] In terms of sex, most rappers deny that they are breaking this Moroccan taboo; for example, Masta Flow[59] denied that any of his video clips or lyrics are sexual, and indeed one does not find clips with the sexuality seen in American Hip Hop videos.[60]

With regard to language, Dareeja is the clear choice for Moroccan rappers. One rapper, Nores, sometimes uses Standard Arabic in his work, but other artists such as Dizzy Dros claim that it is impossible to rap in Standard Arabic and that Nores' use is strictly "ironic."[61] One interesting development is the use of Amazight (Berber) with Jamal Rass Derb as a prominent example.[62] DJs, in turn, sample widely, mixing

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[53] Mehdi Ouassat, "Le Rappeur Dizzy Dros: L'autoproduction Me Permet de Préserver Ma Liberté," *Libération*, 2013, http://www.libe.ma/Le-rappeur-Dizzy-Dros-L-autoproduction-me-permet-de-preserver-ma-liberte_a44336.html.

[54] Dizzy DROS, "Dizzy DROS - Men Hna," May 31, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-D6RIIrJ0R0&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[55] TheMeBoob01, "Masta Flow 2011 New À Medi1,Masta Flow 2011,Rap Marocain 2011,Top Chat Maroc."

[56] TvELaiounCity, "Dizzy DROS Sur Ajial 2M TV."

[57] Ibid.

[58] Zamane, "Pourquoi Nous Sommes Racistes," *Zamane*, November 2013.

[59] TheMeBoob01, "Masta Flow 2011 New À Medi1,Masta Flow 2011,Rap Marocain 2011,Top Chat Maroc."

[60] Elaine Richardson, "`She Was Workin like Foreal': Critical Literacy and Discourse Practices of African American Females in the Age of Hip Hop," *Discourse & Society* 18, no. 6 (2007): 789–809, doi:10.1177/0957926507082197.

[61] TvELaiounCity, "Dizzy DROS Sur Ajial 2M TV."

[62] Resolve Pic, "La Conférence de Presse Agadir Muslim & Jamal Rass Derb Aziz Style Souss," February 1, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ihm87Aw6yRw&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

American beats with Middle Eastern or even Amazight rhythms. One good example of this is DJ Van's song "Inas Inas," which mixes the famous Taschelhit song by Mohamed Rouicha with a house/trance beat.[63]

The issues they address, as with all Hip Hop, flow from the artist's lived experience, and many of the rappers talk about how they draw inspiration from daily life. For example, Masta Flow describes observing the street where he might see a person reading a newspaper, another person blabbing in a café, and another person going to pray.[64] More critically and connected with the importance of the message, artists address the country's persistent poverty, corruption, and lack of real or meaningful employment after education (for example, both Dizzy Dros and Soultana worked in call centers before turning to rap full time).[65] This has led to the accusation that Moroccan rap is persistently negative, to which two responses can be given: 1) that many rap groups such as Fnaire are quite patriotic and push people to be more civically oriented, or 2) that it is important for the rapper to tell the truth, as the rapper Chaht Man asserted in an interview on Ajial.[66]

However, any criticism plays between the country's official/unofficial "red lines" in public discourse that restrain any open attacks on the monarchy or Islam.[67] Even those rappers such as Mehdi L'Bassline who dare to push hard on the system with lyrics such as "Fuck Stability" (استقرار) tend to avoid directly attacking the monarchy or specific elements in the political system.[68] However, those who cross the "red lines" such as Mouad Belghouat/El Haqed may face serious penalties such as time in prison.[69] This leads to one of the issues raised above: whether Moroccan Hip Hop has been coopted or become successfully controlled by the state, particularly in the way that the state has moved from resistance to promotion of the Hip Hop scene through the major festivals L'Boulevard[70] and Mawazine[71] that are either under the direct support of the government or receive significant funding from it.[72] As partial evidence for this view, scholars point out that the government has created a royal federation for the promotion

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[63] oualid abada, "Dj Van Inas Inas (ROuicha)," October 3, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBAcCQ44ZLI&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[64] TheMeBoob01, "Masta Flow 2011 New À Medi1,Masta Flow 2011,Rap Marocain 2011,Top Chat Maroc."

[65] my min, "Soultana on Jota Tv Part 1 (EXCLUSIVE)"; Ouassat, "Le Rappeur Dizzy Dros."

[66] attawri, "Chaht Man @AJIAL."

[67] Boum, "Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization of Hip-Hop Music in Morocco."

[68] ZaKiViSioN, "Mehdi L'Bassline - L'koul Fer3oun Kin Moussa - (Officiel HD)," June 18, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYWJw0MJV_I&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[69] Paul Schemm, "Mouad Belghouat, Moroccan Rapper, Released From Prison," *Huffington Post*, March 30, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/30/mouad-belghouat-moroccan-rapper-prison_n_2984431.html.

[70] L'Association EAC-L'Boulvart, "Boulevard," *L'Boulevard*, n.d., http://www.boulevard.ma/.

[71] Mawazine, "Festival Mawazine Rythmes Du Monde," n.d., http://www.festivalmawazine.ma/.

[72] Boum, "Youth, Political Activism and the Festivalization of Hip-Hop Music in Morocco."; Moreno Almeida, "Unravelling Distinct Voices in Moroccan Rap."

of sports and aerobics, of which Hip Hop plays an important part.[73] Although this argument may be true in many ways, it must be stressed that these major festivals and the royal federation are by far not the only promoters of Hip Hop with others such as Urban Talent, Hip Hop du Bled, and Morocco Generation[74] in addition to independent sponsors such as Clear or Head and Shoulders and promoters such as Amine Wakrim from Meknes organizing independent events and competitions.[75] These venues create spaces for collaboration and competition between artists and, most importantly, take a more holistic view of Hip Hop, offering competitions in a variety of areas such as dance, beatbox, and graffiti in addition to different types of rap.[76] Thus, while the state may have coopted Hip Hop or is trying to do so, it is unclear whether it is succeeding.

Islam itself plays a certain role in Moroccan rap. Indeed, no rapper seeks to challenge or attack Islam as a religion, even if they might criticize some of the hypocrisy or contradictions they see in the Moroccan Muslim community. In addition, creating and maintaining an image of a good Muslim is an important part of some artists' persona. For example, Muslim evokes this directly through his name and his Facebook page consistently has Islamic-oriented messages,[77] and Dizzy Dros' lyrics often talk about his reading the Koran, not drinking, and maintaining prayer even if other elements of his work may run contrary to this message.[78] For women, this issue becomes more complex, as an interview with Hajar, a hijab-wearing b-girl from Temara, pointed out that her wearing the hijab and breakdancing causes confusion in the minds of others and required certain efforts on her part to explain Hip Hop culture to her parents so that they would not forbid her from breakdancing.[79]

Hip Hop in Ifrane

Ifrane is a small community in the Middle Atlas region with a population of about 10,000. There is one public high school which most of the students interviewed either currently attend or attended. Interviews were conducted with local rappers (Omar/RealG and Ashraf of the crew Bad Boys or 3wazza, Achraf/The Dee with his crew Royal Gang, and Nabila, a member of the now defunct all female group The Black Sisters), graffiti artists (Kings of Graffiti, Flowboy, and AthRoot), breakdancers (Ayoub, Youssef, and Fatima-Zahra), a beatboxer (Nassim), a DJ named Tawfik, and Youness, a

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[73] Ministere de la jeunesse et des sports, "Fédération Royale Marocaine Des Sports Aérobics et Fitness," n.d., http://www.frmsaf.com/.

[74] Resolve Pic, "La Conférence de Presse Agadir Muslim & Jamal Rass Derb Aziz Style Souss."

[75] TelQuel, "Gloire À L'art de Rue," *Telquel.ma*, October 8, 2012, http://telquel.ma/2012/10/08/Gloire-a-l-art-de-rue_539_4503.

[76] FESTIVAL HIP HOP WEEK END 2014, "In Facebook [Event Page]," accessed April 5, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/events/393571644070848/.

[77] Muslim, "In Facebook [Group Page]," accessed April 5, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/MuslimProd?fref=ts.

[78] Dizzy DROS, "02 - Dizzy DROS - Omar Smity [Clean Version]," November 21, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4HqG0L6xf0&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

[79] Hajar/B-girl scarf sanchez, personal communication, March 30, 2014.

youth known for his unique way of dressing.[80] Through the interviews and observations, Mehdi and I sought to learn about the artists' personal journeys with Hip Hop, their influences, successes, challenges, adaptations, and overall perspective about Hip Hop in Morocco and Ifrane. In addition, many of these local youth were able to connect us with other Hip Hop artists outside of Ifrane, including female breakdancers in Rabat and Casablanca (e.g. the aforementioned Hajar/B-Girl Scarf Sanchez and another woman named Ilham/Ilo Godsend) and even the famous Tendresse. Most connections took place over Facebook and many YouTube clips or other Internet links were shared to provide evidence of an artist's work.

Throughout all the interviews, the youth revealed that the initial inspiration for them came from listening to or viewing Hip Hop from outside of Morocco. The rappers liked the sounds of Americans such as Tupac Shakur, Eminem, and others; the breakdancers were inspired by the French b-boy Junior, graffiti artists by various images online, and the beatboxers by how-to YouTube videos. However, the youth quickly found that there was a lively Hip Hop scene in Morocco; with this community, the youth were able to feel connected and develop their own skills within the Moroccan context. Indeed, once established, the Ifrane scene provided internal inspiration, as the perspective of Nabila of The Black Sisters shows—she reported that motivation to form an all female rap crew came from viewing the other male rappers in Ifrane.

The youth all choose Hip Hop as both an art form and identity. This is for various reasons starting with the fact that Hip Hop, as mentioned previously, is a well-known and adaptable genre. It also requires little previous experience or core knowledge; indeed, rappers, for example, can start their career simply by reporting what they see in the street. There is no need for overly complicated musical instruments or memorization of classical texts (as is the case with Moroccan malhoun, for example). Similarly, for breakdancers or graffiti artists, all one needs is a place to dance or a spray paint can.

However, one of the main reasons the youth choose Hip Hop is simply because it is the most popular global medium today to express a critical message; indeed, this medium was not the most used in the past and may not be in the future. Omar, for example, elaborated this point by showing that Nass El Ghiwane played this same role in the 70s and that other art forms may develop to replace Hip Hop one day.

What is the Message?

Similar to the issues outlined above, the message that the artists try to express starts with their lived experience and their desire to transmit that to others. This message may be positive or critical but must be authentic to be valued. In Ifrane and specifically for these high-school aged youth, much of the message revolves around

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[80] I use the youths' first name or Hip Hop name only in this paper to offer some anonymity. However, as is suggested later, it is virtually impossible for youth to remain unknown in this small town.

challenges with peers, developing and maintaining an image, dealing with boredom in a small town, and confronting authority.

Omar's lyrics below show some of these elements (Dareeja given in left column, English translation on right):

Omar/RealG 'Blani'	Omar/RealG 'My Plan'
RAP 3awtani Ifrane Real-G -- Ashraf n3awdlikom lblan, 7yati f7al chi moslsal 3aych 7alal, hamd Lah, chad tri9 o hani lbal hada howa l7al dnya ghada o katk7al kola hnar mno ch7al ma3ndakch gha tw7al 3aych khayb lyoum bzwin kan7lam ghada E'nafs diali 7did, 3mrha tatsada dima haz E-ras 3arf mzyan achno kandir li dar l3ib makayn bas dam skhon o 9alb kbir baghi ndir mosta9bal bal7a9 makayn bach lhiba diali dhab 3mrha gha thchach 3yit manchof f had lblad katbanli ghir dbaba tana baghi nkon cha9 tri9 wtgali baba haters o sda3 ras l3alam baghi yban 7san tay9atlona ghir blbas wli ldakhl 3fan 3aychin street life machi chkon ykon 7san radi bli kayn a sat 3wazza's life 7ta lkfan chi haja chab3a class, this is Real-G school tal9inha tsra7 theme west side o old school wa7d mn cha3b everyday RAP & Roll hadchi li kayn lé3b bayn gool ach bghiti tgool li moora dhar bzaf o 3lya ma3araf walo chkatsalo? Salah a sat bnadm malo? ma3labalich gha mat9is chi haja diali maghatswlchna a sat bla mat7awl niveau 3ali Real-G m3ak man, I was a steam clean only God judges al3awd you know what I mean bnadm m9ros mskin, f domaine 3ad tzad la drti 3nd 3wazza yhazo machatch alblad makan7mlch RAP howa li fya las9 lmkhayar flbyad9 maychamo wakha sma tlas9 t3ya ùmatchabat fina 3mr din mok madime f RAP wakhd l prime, flow mbrom f ZigZag Slim mch7al wana galb tangol makayn bas, 3wazza l3foo RAPi lsma haz E-ras	RAP again Ifrane Real-G -- Ashraf I'll tell you the story, my life is like a chain living right, thanking God, walking my way with a free mind this is the situation, life is getting darker many days are just the same, if you're poor you're stuck living bad today, but with good dreaming tomorrow my soul made of iron, never going to get rusty always with my head up, I know well what I'm doing if they've done bad it's okay, hot blood and big heart I want to build my future, but I got nothing my greatness is gold, it'll never be weak in this country I see only fog I want to make my way and hear someone calling me dad haters & headache the world's trying to appear better they kill us with their clothes but inside they're dirty we're living street life it's not about who's better accepting our fate, nig**s life till death something full of class, this is Real-G's school just freestyling, theme west side & old school I'm a citizen like the rest everyday rap & roll everything is obvious say what you have to say they talk a lot behind my back but they don't know a thing what do I owe you? Salah my man, what's wrong with these people I don't care just don't touch something I own you'll never reach us, don't try our level's high Real-G's here, I was clean like steam, only God judges, you know what I mean they're poor jealous people in RAP were just born if you turn to nig**s they'll say nothing's left I don't like RAP, but it's in love with me the best fag***s won't reach this even if the sky collapses they'll keep grabbing us but they'll never dominate in RAP I got a prime my flow's rolled in ZigZag Slim it's been a long time pretending all Okay nig**s God bless you all my RAP to the sky raising its head.

In the graffiti scene, creating an identity is also very important. One of the main groups in Ifrane, a three-person group called Kings of Graffiti, created a number of works around Ifrane with the simple KOG tag in various formations, of which this is an example:

Figure 1: Kings of Graffiti Tag, Ifrane, Morocco

When it comes to confronting authority, the graffiti artists whose work is more public and illegal are especially at risk. However, the danger is part of the inspiration in this cat-and-mouse relationship between the artist and authority. However, the youth must also express themselves carefully, and this graffiti, made by Flowboy and his crew, is deceptively subversive:

Figure 2: VIRUS tag between Ifrane and Azrou

The word, VIRUS, was explained as delivering a message that the police/authority is something that needs to be infected; indeed, Flowboy put it in simple terms by saying that the police/authorities are the anti-virus and the youth are the virus.

Another graffiti piece by AthRoot shows the Angel of Death holding a spray paint can, indicating the relationship between the artist's conception of rebellion through art. This rebellion is not always easy; this particular graffiti was done in about two minutes in the early morning, and the artist had to run away from the guardian of the building. Also, the previous VIRUS graffiti required the artists to get up in the early morning, hike about two kilometers to a space between Ifrane and Azrou, and do the art while looking out for passing cars and police.

Figure 3: Angel of Death tag

Hip Hop dress can be another way for a youth to form an identity. For example, one can observe the hair and dress of Fatima-Zahra, a local b-girl, or the way Youness blends traditional Moroccan clothes and Hip Hop style by wearing the pants that go with a traditional *djabadour* with a puffy Hip Hop style jacket.

Figure 4: Hip Hop dress in Ifrane. Left is Fatima-Zahra and right is Youness.

Challenges and Issues for Hip Hop Culture in Ifrane

Although Hip Hop allows the youth to develop an identity, deliver a message, and react against authority in various ways, there are significant challenges to Hip Hop in Ifrane. All the youth interviewed mentioned the lack of support, material and moral, or even the active or passive resistance they feel in this small community.

The lack of material support impacts the breakdancers most directly as they have few, if any, places to train. This would require a space with appropriate flooring for the various moves the breakdancers perform. This has led Ayoub and his group System Crew to even practice in the street, breaking on the hard concrete.[81] Although this helps to maintain Ayoub's hardcore image, it has negative impacts on the body; indeed, Ayoub used the expression 'kaymut lham' or 'the body's dead' to talk about the physical effect of breakdancing in the street.

Additionally, rappers face the challenge that there is no recording studio in Ifrane and the quality of self-produced work is low. As a result, if they want to record anything, they have to go to Meknes and pay between 200-500 dirhams ($30 to $60) to record one track.

The lack of moral support from the community is significant. At the least, Hip Hop artists may be labeled 'Wlad znqa' 'street kids' or worse. Male breakdancers may be told that dancing is only for girls; female Hip Hop dancers may be criticized for dancing with males. Graffiti artists are told that their work is ruining the walls and usually have it painted over within a short amount of time.

More significantly, the youth may encounter both passive and active resistance from the authorities/local Makhzen. The Dee related a particularly egregious episode: During the 2013 Youth Festival in Ifrane, his group, Royal Crew, won the best rap group category, and the host of the event promised in public, as a reward, to outfit the local youth house (Dar Chebab) with material for more events such as microphones, a mixing board, etc. However, following the festival, when the Royal Crew went to the youth house to use the material, the manager told them that Hip Hop was not art and forbade them to use the supplies.

More passive resistance is met when the youth try to register for one of the various festivals such as the Tourtite, Apple, or Snow festivals.[82] When the youth approach the local administrators or send in their samples, they are either told that the program is full, they should have come earlier, or receive no response at all.

Convincing parents to allow the youth to continue with Hip Hop culture is sometimes a struggle. Some of the youth reported having fairly open-minded parents whereas others were more skeptical and required the youth to swear that Hip Hop would not interfere with their studies or cause problems. However, here the role of the

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[81] For example, see the video Mehdi produced about Hip Hop in Ifrane *Shta.mpg*.

[82] Menara, "La 7ème Édition Du Festival International Tourtite d'Ifrane, Du 22 Au 25 Aout Prochain," *Menara.ma*, 2013, http://www.menara.ma/fr/2013/07/23/703325-la-7%C3%A8me-%C3%A9dition-du-festival-international-tourtite-difrane-du-22-au-25-aout-prochain.html.

festivals and competitions, especially Urban Talent and Hip Hop du Bled, is especially important as a legitimizing factor for the youth.

Ifrane youth have done relatively well at these festivals, with Omar, The Dee, Kings of Graffiti, and Ayoub all placing, even winning, during the previous years' festivals. This, in the eyes of the parents, helps them to understand that the youth are serious and may even benefit from participating. Amine of Kings of Graffiti, for example, said that his parents changed their minds about Hip Hop after he got first in graffiti art in 2007 and 2009 and third in 2008.

More generally, these events serve to bring youth together in a positive and competitive environment. Indeed, as these posters show for Meknes' Hip Hop Weekend held in April 2014 and last year's Urban Dance competition, there are youth from all around the Meknes region, of which are Omar's crew Bad Boys and The Dee. Moreover, even if certain youth like the dancer Fatima-Zahra or the beatboxer Nassim have never competed, they are preparing to take this step.

Figure 5: Examples of promotional materials for Hip Hop Weekend and Urban Talent

Despite the benefits of these festivals, it remains true that Ifrane is a small town and one of the challenges is that everybody knows everybody. This is especially hard for the graffiti artists who cannot stay anonymous in reality. However, connections to power in a small town may be useful. Indeed, Amine of Kings of Graffiti was once at risk of being arrested for his work, but because his father is connected to the local authorities, the Makhzen, he was released.

Related to this issue, the role of Islam intersects with Hip Hop culture in a small town in a wider way. Some of the youth admitted that their participation in Hip Hop life brings in other elements such as alcohol, drugs, and sex and ignoring Islamic activities such as prayer. When Omar and Achraf were asked specifically how this makes them feel, they responded that it makes them feel guilty and they hoped that they would correct this behavior in the future. On the other hand, some artists such as Fatima-Zahra feel that, while there might be friction between Islam and dance, they can coexist without guilt as long as one's values, morality, and behavior do not change. On the other hand, Hip Hop and Islamic practice can come together in interesting ways; Fatima-Zahra connected me to Hajar, the aforementioned hijab-wearing breakdancer from Rabat. Hajar makes the hijab a clear part of her Hip Hop persona and frequently posts pictures of herself in different hijab styles on her Facebook page. In general, youth admire artists such as Muslim who manage to foreground their Islamic values while still producing high quality Hip Hop.

Expanding possibilities for Hip Hop and Youth

Hip Hop, as mentioned before, is more than simply rap or certain art forms. The youth understand this and have already adapted Hip Hop to their local and personal tastes. For example, the graffiti artist AthRoot said that he considers street magic and skateboarding to be elements of Hip Hop. In addition, Fatima-Zahra mentioned parkour as a common element, and indeed Amine Wakrim includes this as a competitive element in some Hip Hop competitions.[83]

The final element to mention is that most of these youth have great aspirations for Hip Hop in Ifrane and for their lives specifically. Amine of Kings of Graffiti is one example, and the situation of DJ Tock/Taoufik is specifically illustrative here as he left high school in his final year and set off to become a professional DJ. He enrolled at a private art academy in Marrakeh focused on Hip Hop[84] and did a three-month DJ training. Following that, he had several trainings in 'animation' (i.e. how to DJ a party) at different hotels—Songo and Frame in Marrakesh, and the Grand Hotel in Ifrane. He also received a certificate from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. He has invested in buying all the equipment for DJing a party—lights, microphones, mixing table, etc. Currently, he lives in Ifrane and promotes his DJ business in the region. Although he identifies the same challenges to the Hip Hop culture as the other youth, he is eager to be a sort of Hip Hop organizer, perhaps register an organization, and generally advocate for more Hip Hop acceptance and exposure in Ifrane.

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[83] Roim6, "Tendresse Sur Ajial 2M Dimanche 19 Juin 2011."

[84] "Art Academy," n.d., http://artacademy.ma/; KidaKesh, "Art Academy," n.d., http://www.kidakech.com/activites/danse/art-academy/.

Conferencing as Entrée to a Critical Approach: Postcolonialism and Cousins

The description to this point involves, more or less, what Mehdi and I presented at the popular culture conference at AUI. We co-presented as equals in the research project and were honored to have many of the local Hip Hop artists mentioned above in attendance. Overall, the presentation was well received, but one of the questions raised helps me introduce a critical, politically-invested, approach—postcolonialism and its cousins—as part of Lather's interpretive project.

During the conference, one of other participants, Dr. Mustapha Khiri of Meknes' Moulay Ismail University, presented a paper entitled, "Les jeux et les jouets traditionnels des enfants du Ksar Ait Guetou" ("Toys and traditional games of the children of Ksar Ait Guetou") during a panel that I chaired. This presentation, in general, lamented the loss of traditional games in his Amazight village and his efforts, as an academic and activist, to maintain and/or revive these practices. His argument was that the modern world was pushing out these traditional games, and he had formed an association to try to save them. This, in itself, is positive, and I enjoyed talking with Dr. Khiri afterwards. However, following our presentation, Dr. Khiri asked several questions that implied that Hip Hop was detrimental to Moroccan culture and that the Ifrani youth had nothing to complain about as they lived in a nice touristic city where, presumably, everybody was economically well off. I addressed this in part, but Mehdi provided a much more grounded response, especially to the second question, by asserting that poverty was a significant issue in Ifrane, despite the stereotype that other Moroccans have about the city.

This episode provides an introduction to a critical and political approach, This is, in reality, a confluence of several trends—post-colonialism, neocolonialism, neoliberalism, globalization, and postmodernism—that create, in this context, what we might call "Hip Hop anxiety," or the fear that Hip Hop, as some global, capitalist, Western movement, is going to destroy traditional life.

This anxiety does have a rational basis born out of historic and economic situations. Many colonized countries won independence during the 20th century, Morocco included, after a long period of struggle. However, in many cases, the struggle for autonomy was just beginning, requiring the establishment of new governments and fully removing the colonizer (which many suggest has never fully happened).[85] Then, the rise of the U.S. economy and the spread of its culture brought a new colonizer whose economic and cultural reach expanded exponentially to the point that, today, English and American culture are the world's lingua franca.[86] This rise was

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[85] Homi K. Bhabha, "Is Frantz Fanon Still Relevant?," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 51, no. 28 (March 18, 2005): B14–15; Sankaran Krishna, *Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-First Century* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

[86] David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), http://ebooks.cambridge.org/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9780511486999; Peter Ives, "Cosmopolitanism and Global English: Language Politics in Globalisation Debates," *Political Studies* 58, no. 3 (June 2, 2009): 516–35, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00781.x.

partially fueled by the neoliberal consensus that a global regime of low-taxes, free trade, high growth, and low social service programs was the only viable economic system.[87] On the other hand, in the world of knowledge production, positivism and its predictive capacity has been gradually eroded and replaced by a paradigm that, for some, marks the end of meaning and the eventual rise of nihilism.[88] As a result, the *zeitgeist* is often portrayed as a zero-sum game of competition where winners survive and losers die. Even if other views exist that promote dialogue and an expansion of ideas as positive and redemptive elements, the negativity and hopelessness can seem overwhelming.

Indeed, one of Hip Hop's most pressing critiques is Western cultural borrowing is contributing to previous and present colonialism in the region.[89] As such, Hip Hop sits astride these postmodern fears, and although the response to these fears may be incoherent and developing, what seems to arise from the youths' voices is a reiteration that Hip Hop is not an unchanging monolith adverse to dialogue or committed to destroying other art forms. As such, Hip Hop is just a proxy for this fear, expressed in one form by Dr. Khiri. The youth would likely assert that, if traditional games go extinct, it will not be because of Hip Hop. In fact, it might be because of Morocco's own development, spurred by both citizen demands that the government improve their lives as well as the global neoliberal development project. In either case, as more areas gain access to water, electricity, Internet, and education, these games will face increasing pressure. In turn, Hip Hop itself will face pressure to remain relevant. Indeed, Omar pointed out above that Hip Hop is just the medium of the times, but one can imagine that other forms will come that are more appropriate. If Lather[90] and Gergen[91] are correct in that the trajectory of the postmodern world is to create, in effect, a more caring, open, educated, and dialogic space where people at the margins or borders do not experience oppression, Hip Hop may indeed have little to complain about. That would be, in my opinion, a welcome day, and I look forward to the music this new paradigm would create.

In sum, seeing Dr. Khiri's point in a larger political context is important and, as such, his "Hip Hop anxiety" can be forgiven, but the real question is how to bring the worlds of traditional games and Hip Hop together in dialogue so that both can be preserved and strengthened.

Deconstruction to Magnify Oppressed Voices: Women and Youth

At this point, it is necessary to reassess the experience so as to highlight overlooked or oppressed voices. In this paper, it is clear that at least one voice has been

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[87] Brett Lashua, Karl Spracklen, and Stephen Wagg, eds., *Sounds and the City: Popular Music, Place and Globalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[88] Lather, *Getting Smart*, 160–161.

[89] Gana, "Rap and Revolt in the Arab World"; Kahf, "Arabic Hip Hop: Claims of Authenticity and Identity of a New Genre."

[90] Lather, *Getting Smart*, 1.

[91] *An Invitation to Social Construction*, chap. 7.

submerged: The feminine. Partly, this is a matter of presentation; I wanted to give this voice its own space, but it is also a matter of the data collected in that there were simply far more Hip Hop males to interview in Ifrane and watch in YouTube and other fora. However, this is not a situation that needs to be taken as a given; in fact, the voices of females in Hip Hop are strong, but the males may simply outnumber them at the present moment. On the global level and particularly in the Arab world, female Hip Hop artists nuance Hip Hop studies greatly, highlighting the intersections of art, gender, and race in this region.[92]

Hip Hop has frequently been criticized as representing and perpetuating the patriarchal, capitalist system that is a cause of oppression and inequality of women; however, Hip Hop is also a powerful site of empowerment and engagement.[93] In the MENA region, the issue of women in Hip Hop becomes more problematic still as Arab and/or Muslim female artists may face steeper cultural challenges, even if there are some prominent players such as Shadia Mansour.[94]

Two of the more serious issues faced by Moroccan Hip Hop are those pointed out by the female artist Soultana in an interview on Jota TV.[95] The first issue is the stagnation of Hip Hop itself, particularly at the national level. Soultana states that, whenever there is a major festival, the organizers invite the five or six main male players (e.g. Bigg, Fnaire, Ash Kayne, et al.) and ignore the others. The second is the loss of the female perspective. Soultana elaborates on this by saying that the male Moroccan rapper talks about the street, but that is not the primary locus of her experience as a female (and, by extension, other women's).   The reasons for this lack are various; for example, the artist Tendresse talks about the negative initial reaction women face from the Moroccan community, parents, and other male Hip Hop artists.[96] Thus, for these women, the "personal is political"[97] as women seek both greater exposure in the Moroccan market as well as the ability to share their unique viewpoint on Moroccan life through art.

In Ifrane, the number of female artists is also relatively low. The two women interviewed here, Fatima-Zahra and Nabila, both referenced the difficulties they had with their parents at first but, thankfully, were able to overcome them. Although Nabila has left the Hip Hop scene, Fatima-Zahra represents the aspiration to be taken seriously most directly with her dedication to dance and her Hip Hop style. Moreover, her inspiration comes from other female Hip Hop artists and activists such as Laure

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[92] Zenzele Isoke, "'Why Am I Black?' Gendering Hip Hop, and Translocal Solidarities in Dubai," in *Intercultural Communication with Arabs*, ed. Rana Raddawi (Springer Singapore, 2015), 309–26, http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-287-254-8_18.

[93] Patricia Hill Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop: Racism, Nationalism, and Feminism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Pough, "Do the Ladies Run This...? Some Thoughts on Hip Hop Feminism"; Richardson, "`She Was Workin like Foreal'."

[94] Nomadic Wax, "Hip Hop: It's a Woman's World Too," *The Guardian*, January 24, 2013, sec. Music, http://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2013/jan/24/Hip Hop-woman-world.

[95] my min, "Soultana on Jota Tv Part 1 (EXCLUSIVE)."

[96] Roim6, "Tendresse Sur Ajial 2M Dimanche 19 Juin 2011."

[97] Collins, *From Black Power to Hip Hop*, chap. 6.

Courtellemont, a dancehall performer and creator of Regga Jam.[98] In addition, she connects with other women such as the aforementioned Hajar or Ilham in their mutual activism for women in Hip Hop.

A second oppressed voice is the youths'. As Osumare points out,[99] youth Hip Hop artists generally see themselves as critical voices reacting to injustice stemming from their culture, class, historical oppression, and their peripheral status as youth. The majority of the Hip Hop artists interviewed here falls into this category by being under 18 years old and still living with their parents. As such, they are creating a youth subculture in Ifrane that is a reaction to the dominant Moroccan culture they live in. This Ifrane Hip Hop culture is part of a repeated process of a subculture's appearing, asserting itself, resisting the mainstream culture, gaining acceptance, being adopted, and then struggling with issues of authenticity and identity. Through this process, the youth subculture manages to be both a revolutionary and reactionary force that causes change while still maintaining the society's essential features.[100]

For Hip Hop at the national level, this youth subculture has succeeded in creating an artistic space for expression that is home grown. Masta Flow emphasizes this by describing the most important elements of Hip Hop as the youths' message, self-expression, self-satisfaction, and general enjoyment in addition to pointing out that, for a certain period in Moroccan history, every youths' dream was to emigrate to Europe, but Hip Hop has managed to create an alternate dream, an alternate possibility.[101] This view can be supported by the great variety and dynamism in the Moroccan Hip Hop scene as evidenced by the aforementioned festivals in various cities that support the culture as well as the myriad YouTube and Facebook pages promoting aspects of Moroccan Hip Hop culture such as graffiti,[102] beatboxing,[103] DJs,[104] or various breakdancing crews.[105]

Self-Reflexive

In this last section, I turn to a self-reflexive stance. This project has been positive for me personally, and I understand from recent discussions with Mehdi that the

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[98] "Laure Courtellemont," accessed December 15, 2014, http://laurecourtellemont.com/.

[99] Osumare, "Global Hip Hop and the African Diaspora."

[100] Rupa Huq, *Beyond Subculture: Pop, Youth and Identity in a Postcolonial World*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2006); J. Patrick Williams, *Subcultural Theory: Traditions and Concepts*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2011).

[101] TheMeBoob01, "Masta Flow 2011 New À Medi1,Masta Flow 2011,Rap Marocain 2011,Top Chat Maroc."

[102] "StreetArt & Graffiti in Morocco," *Facebook*, accessed October 23, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/StreetArtMorocco.

[103] Moroccan beat-box, "In Facebook [Group Page]," accessed April 5, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/MoroccanBeatBox?fref=ts.

[104] Moroccan Producers, Beat Makers & DJs, "In Facebook [Group Page]," accessed April 5, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/marocprod?fref=ts.

[105] The Message crew, "In Facebook [Group Page]," accessed April 5, 2014, https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Message-crew/109705752452107?fref=ts.

conference was empowering for the youth. Indeed, one student not directly involved in the research was able to use the conference's success to convince his parents to allow him to start a new rap group and compete in Hip Hop du Bled, which the group won in Fall 2014. This certainly fits with parts of my emancipatory hopes for the project.

However, there was one thing that bothered me in the end—how quickly I became accepted as an expert on Hip Hop in Morocco. I find this problematic in that, although I have had an interest in this art form during my years in Morocco, I am not a daily connoisseur of it nor have extended experience beyond this four-month research project. Also, although my French and Dareeja are strong enough to conduct interviews myself and understand the news media about Hip Hop, I required the help of youth to understand the details of many songs. Although this experience may be more significant than some other studies, it is still limited.

This expert status was carried to the point that another AUI faculty who produces radio shows for National Public Radio enlisted my help to contact female Hip Hop artists. His project idea was to interview female artists and then me as a resident "expert" on Hip Hop. He was able to contact Tendress and Hajar through me and Soultana through another connection. I accepted and even did the interview, but thankfully it never aired because Tendress and Soultana did not come to their interviews. In the end, Hajar's piece aired by itself, which was the best result.[106]

What bothers me here is that I was sought out as an expert about female Hip Hop artists in Morocco when I am none of these things. I should have refused to do the interview on principle but wanted to help a friend and colleague. The more general issue here is that in the media so many times some "expert" is asked to talk about a situation about which he/she has little information or investment. With respect to this story specifically, it develops more troubling binaries such as "traditional" and "modern" as well as the West's fascination/concern with the hijab. Although Hajar certainly evokes many of these elements, in my own conversations with her, she expressed more frustrations with the lack of Hip Hop infrastructure in the Rabat area than issues she had with parents or the hijab. In this way, I agree wholeheartedly with Bhat that "the image of Moroccan Hip Hop largely represents an identity thrust upon the movement by Western and local media in an attempt to fulfill *their* fantasies about what this genre *should* represent" (italics in original).[107]

Conclusion

This modest contribution to Hip Hop studies, admittedly conducted by two amateurs using ethnographic methods that most certainly could have been better conceived theoretically and implemented technically, nevertheless brings several useful points to bear. First, Hip Hop is a complex phenomenon at every level, but in Morocco studies have tended to focus on binaries such as the relationship between the artist and

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[106] Jake Warga, "Hijab Wearing Breakdancer Turns Heads in Morocco," *Public Radio International*, June 6, 2014, http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-06-06/hijab-wearing-breakdancer-turns-heads-morocco.
[107] Bhat, "Hip Hop Highways: Mapping Complex Identities through Moroccan Rap," 43.

the government. This work has sought to dispel this binary by pointing out that there are multiple webs of support and resistance to Hip Hop in Morocco and that the Hip Hop community is not some passive object to be exploited by the government; indeed, the relationship remains complex and unsettled. Second, we have tried to complicate the discourse in Moroccan Hip Hop that privileges the famous male rapper voice by amplifying the experiences of local youth, specifically seeking out female voices, and conceiving of the entire research project as an exercise in emancipation for youth negotiating the transition from youth to adulthood.

Although this work brings certain complexity to the field, more work can be done. As discussed, a much more systematic, creative, long-term, and geographically unbounded approach to the ethnographic work would help immensely in tracking and describing the webs of meanings in Moroccan Hip Hop.[108] In addition, the analytical approach taken in this paper can be extended to uncover more voices—these might be those of Amazight (Berber) Hip Hop artists, geographically remote areas, different age groups, ethnicities, and even the researchers themselves. However, it must be stressed that even such an approach would be incomplete; indeed, there is no completeness to Hip Hop—one can only hope to hold and describe, for a moment, the voices, beats, and moves that emanate from it.

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[108] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

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From A-Town to ATL: The Politics of Translation in Global Hip Hop Culture

Holger Droessler

This article examines the linguistic and cultural tensions in global Hip Hop culture through an analysis of the performance of Gsann, an emcee from the Tanzanian Hip Hop crew X Plastaz, at the 2009 Black Entertainment Television (BET) Hip Hop Awards in Atlanta. Gsann's rhymes in Swahili, his emphasis on religion, and his global travels distinguished him from his African American colleagues in the cipha. At the same time, the decision by the BET producers to translate Gsann's Swahili rhymes into English has to be seen within the longer history of cultural and linguistic politics in Tanzania and the United States. Thrown into the primetime spectacle of the BET Awards, Gsann's African roots became quickly incorporated into American Hip Hop culture, dominated by African Americans. As this case study of an artist from Tanzania shows, Hip Hop's global journey has brought together artists from around the world without eliding their cultural and linguistic differences.

At the 2009 Black Entertainment Television (BET) Hip Hop Awards in Atlanta, Gsann, an emcee from Arusha, Tanzania, joined a cipha with such African American veterans as DJ Premier and KRS-1. Gsann's one-minute rap in Swahili made his African American colleagues nod their heads in agreement with his flow, although the content of his lyrics remained a mystery both to them and most of the viewers in front of the TV screens. Aware of the importance of language in Hip Hop, the BET producers sought to close the language gap and provided an English translation of Gsann's rhymes in subtitles.[1]

Taking Gsann's appearance at the BET Awards as a case study, this article explores the fundamental tension between Hip Hop's local roots and global routes. Gsann's Swahili rap, I argue, represents a miniature example of the unifying and dividing forces at work in contemporary global Hip Hop culture. On the one hand, Gsann uses Swahili to reflect on local issues to Tanzania such as religion, but also on his global travels that have led him to Atlanta. On the other hand, the BET producers translated his Swahili rhymes into English to make them intelligible to viewers in the United States and around the world. If Gsann's rap was an act of cultural and linguistic self-assertion, it also became quickly incorporated into the commercial spectacle of American Hip Hop on primetime television. The artistic journey of a Tanzanian emcee—from A-Town (Arusha) to ATL (Atlanta)—deserves a more thorough contextualization than the BET subtitles were able to provide.

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[1] The video is available on youtube: <youtube.com/watch?v=TetSMSdxIqA> 1:34-2:18. Accessed Apr. 24, 2015.

Welcome to the Global Cipha

From 'J-Hop' in Tokyo to 'Nederhop' in Amsterdam and Aboriginal rap in Melbourne, Hip Hop has truly gone global—while staying firmly rooted in the local. Global Hip Hop today thrives in a creative tension between what historian Robin D. G. Kelley has called Hip Hop's fundamental "ghettocentricity"[2] and the hybrid process of adapting globalized cultural practices to local needs, often referred to as "glocalization."[3] Mohammed Yunus Rafiq, one of the founding members of the X Plastaz, described his view of the glocal hybridity of Hip Hop in a roundtable discussion with other artists: "We can be tribal, and at the same time, we can also be global."[4]

As Gsann's fellow crew member notes, the local and the global need not to be mutually exclusive in Hip Hop—particularly in its everyday practice. By contrast, the local and the global can enter into a dialogue in what global Hip Hop scholars James G. Spady, H. Samy Alim, and Samir Meghelli have called the "global cipha."[5] This global cipha can be seen as the extension of community ciphas on the micro level of Hip Hop culture: "In the same way that local Hip Hop artists build community and construct social organization through the rhyming practices involved in tha cipha, Hip Hop communities worldwide interact with each other (through media and cultural flow, as well as embodied international travel) in ways that organize their participation in a mass-mediated, cultural movement."[6]

As "an organic, highly charged, fluid circular arrangement of rhymers wherein participants exchange verses," the cipha represents Hip Hop culture on its molecular level.[7] The BET cipha—pre-recorded before the actual show in an empty factory building in Brooklyn—represents a conscious attempt to re-enact the atmosphere of an old-school cipha in the now antiquated visual aesthetics of black and white. The pre-produced snippet was then played on screens for the live audience at the awards ceremony in Atlanta. In other words, Gsann's performance in the cipha was both spatially and temporally detached from the actual awards show, even though the

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[2] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1994), 212.

[3] Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in: *Global Modernities*, edited by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1995), 26.

[4] Cristina Verán, '"Native Tongues: Hip-Hop's Global Indigenous Movement," in: *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, edited by Jeff Chang (New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books, 2006), 281.

[5] The English word "cipher" or "cypher" derives from the Arabic *ṣifr*, which means "zero" or "nothing." Hip Hop practitioners appropriated the term "cipha" with its circular representation in the Arabic number "0" to describe the community circles among freestylers, b-girls, and weed smokers.

[6] James G. Spady, H. Samy Alim, and Samir Meghelli, *Tha Global Cipha: Hip Hop Culture and Consciousness* (Philadelphia, PA: Black History Museum Press, 2006), 11.

[7] H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook, eds., *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 1.

viewers in front of the TV screens were made to believe that Hip Hop's past and present easily merged into one another.

The BET cipha, in sum, offers a highly mediated and meticulously orchestrated performance stage that Gsann and the other emcees are using to showcase much more than simply their rhyming skills. In an interview after the show, Gsann acknowledged that his rhymes were not improvised: "It was a written verse taken from a new track 'Safari Na Muzik.' I just crafted it to the beat of 'The Funky Drummer' by James Brown, backspun by DJ Premier."[8] Beyond their mere verbal agility, the artists' membership in global Hip Hop culture is on display in the cipha.

God as the Captain of Gsann's Ship

Gsann's rap can be read as an act of self-positioning of a Tanzanian emcee in Hip Hop's cultural center. His rap shows both his self-awareness as an African emcee among African Americans and draws attention to the global map of contemporary Hip Hop culture. In his rhymes, Gsann brings a uniquely global perspective to the BET cipha, which sets him apart from the local ghettocentricity of the African American emcees. Here are Gsann's Swahili rhymes (in italics) and their English translation as it appeared on the television subtitles (with literal translations in parentheses, when applicable):

> *Ni safari na musiki*
> It's a journey with music
>
> *Tunakwenda hatufik*
> We are traveling, but we are not getting there
>
> *Japokuwa tuna dhik bado tumekaza 'buti'*
> Despite all the difficulties we persevere
> (Despite difficulties, still we tighten our boots)
>
> *Toka TZ nyumbani mpaka 'cipha' BET*
> From our home in Tanzania to the BET cipha
>
> *Mungu ibariki, tupo siku pita dhiki*
> God bless, one day we will succeed
> (God bless, we are at the day of overcoming difficulties)
>
> *Nikipata riziki, hata kidogo sikatai*
> If I just can sustain myself, I am alright

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[8] Thomas Gesthuizen, "Tanzanian Emcee in BET Hip Hop Awards Cipha," *AfricanHipHop.com*. Oct. 26, 2009. <http://www.africanhiphop.com/tanzanian-emcee-in-bet-hip-hop-awards-cypher>. Accessed July 31, 2014.

(If I get blessings, even a little bit, I won't refuse it)

Popote naingia, hata kama sina 'tai'
I'm entering every spot, even when I don't wear a tie

Popote nina 'chana', hata kama hapafai
I will rap everywhere, even if it's the wrong place
(I light fire anywhere, even if it's not a suitable place)

Na popote ninakwenda pale njisinidai
And wherever I go, I won't pretend to be someone I'm not

Safari na musiki, piga teke usiogope
On this journey with music, don't be afraid to kick
(The journey of music, kick it, don't be afraid)

Unaweza ukafika pia unaweza usifike
You may arrive, but then again you may not

Unaweza ukasifika pia unaweza usisifike
You may be praised and you may not

Ukaaibika usiaibike; na ukachemsha usichemshe
You may be embarrassed and you may mess it all up
(You may be embarrassed or you may not, you may be boiled or you may not)

Kiongozi na Mlinzi wa jahazi ni Mwenyezi
God is the captain and the protector of this ship

XPs, TZ, Uholanzi, Brixton, Brussles, na Stockholm, na Olso, na Gabon, na Brazil
X Plastaz, Tanzania, Holland, Brixton, Brussels, Stockholm, Oslo, Gabon, and Brazil

Ni sisi na safari ya muziki ni asili.
It's us and the journey with music is the source.[9]

While Gsann does mention his home country of Tanzania twice, he goes on to index a set of localities in which global Hip Hop culture has taken root. Far from being arbitrary,

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[9] English subtitles by BET: <youtube.com/watch?v=TetSMSdxIqA> 1:34-2:18. Accessed Apr. 24, 2015. Swahili transcription and literal English translation by Lowell Brower, Nkatha Kabira, and John Mugane.

Gsann's mapping of countries and cities on three different continents recounts the actual global journey of the X Plastaz over the years leading up to 2009.

As part of their first tour abroad, the X Plastaz performed in the Netherlands in 2001 and 2002. While touring through the Netherlands, the group was introduced to a Dutch-Ethiopian DJ and producer, DJ Precise, with whom they went on to record songs for their first album *Maasai Hip Hop*, which was released by the German label OutHere Records in 2004. In 2003, they returned to Europe for a performanceat the Coleur Café Festival in Brussels as well as two shows in London. After attracting attention from European audiences and DJs, the X Plastaz continued their global journey in 2005 to Brazil and Scandinavia participating at festivals in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador as well as in Oslo and Stockholm. The following year, the X Plastaz performed at the Gabao Hip Hop Festival in Libreville, Gabon—the first East African Hip Hop group to do so in French-speaking Africa. Over the years, the X Plastaz have performed alongside such American Hip Hop bands as The Roots and Public Enemy, as well as Senegalese world music superstar Youssou N'Dour. In his rhymes, Gsann proudly recalls this journey around the world, illuminating the truly global contours of today's Hip Hop culture.

The recurrent metaphor of the *journey* that frames Gsann's rap highlights both his individual journey from A-Town to ATL as well as the global flows of Hip Hop culture, in general. Using the metaphor of the journey—*safari* in Swahili—Gsann not only structures his rhyme flow, but, more importantly, also captures the spatial and cultural mobility of Hip Hop. Several verbs that Gsann uses help to reinforce the centrality of mobility and travel: "We are *traveling*, but we are not *getting* there," "I'm *entering* every spot," "wherever I *go*," "You may *arrive*," "God is the *captain* and the protector of this *ship*." The first and last of these examples are of particular interest. The line "We are traveling, but we are not getting there" invokes an unspecified subject in the plural—Gsann and his crew, Gsann and his fellow emcees in the cipha, or Gsann and the entire global Hip Hop community—that is "traveling," but "not getting there."

This tension between the act of communal travel and the failure to arrive at the desired destination can be read in different ways. On the most immediate level, Gsann could be referring to the global travels that he and his crew have completed over the last few years, without fully achieving the commercial and artistic success they were aiming for. On a more abstract level, the verse could also be understood as an analogy to life, in general, that keeps us on a continuous journey without the guarantee of safe arrival at the places we intend to go. Yet despite our awareness of the contingency of successful traveling, Gsann continues, "we persevere." This connection between the trope of mobility and the contingency of success resurfaces again when Gsann's staccato rhymes explore the competitive character of a cipha: "You may arrive, but then again you may not / You may be praised and you may not / You may be embarrassed and you may mess it all up."

The fundamental openness of success—in a Hip Hop cipha as in life—eventually dissolves into another set of metaphors of motion: "God is the *captain* and the protector of this *ship*." No matter how uncertain his life journeys appear to be, Gsann suggests, God's stewardship and protective hand will guide our way. The religious theme of the

concluding line, in particular, sets Gsann's rhymes apart from the more traditional battle rhymes of the other emcees. The verse powerfully foregrounds Gsann's belief in God and his inherent goodness. Gsann remains true to his earlier statement that he will not "pretend to be someone [he is] not" when he makes his religious faith explicit in a setting that does rely on something like divine inspiration, but traditionally is as far removed from the realm of the sacred word as Arusha is from Atlanta.

While religion does figure prominently in the music of many Hip Hop artists in the United States and has even sparked entire subgenres, verbal battles are rarely arenas where the confession of one's religious faith is deemed appropriate, let alone helpful to win the battle.[10] As Gsann's emphasis on his religious beliefs illustrates, Hip Hop outside of the United States does not only adapt its musical grammar to local languages, but, perhaps even more importantly, also incorporates local issues and concerns. Religion is one of the most salient examples of Hip Hop culture's localization in Africa. Significantly, it is not only African Hip Hop artists who incorporate their spiritual concerns into their music, but African immigrants arriving in the United States, too, bring along their religious beliefs and are knitting networks of spiritual exchange across the Black Atlantic.[11]

Gsann's presence within the core of an art form traditionally associated with African Americans cannot be understood without taking into account the crucial context of African immigration to the United States. The claims by some African Hip Hop artists that the cultural origins of Hip Hop do not lie in the North American inner city, but in the griot and rhythmic poetry traditions of Western and Eastern Africa, are paralleled by discussions about who counts as "black" in the age of Obama.[12] Just as recent African immigrants complicate monolithic notions of black solidarity in American society, creating new sites of conflict as well as cooperation among people of color, so does Gsann challenge the historically grown cultural hegemony of African American artists within Hip Hop culture. Like other African immigrants to the United States, Gsann (who was living in Chicago in 2009) brings new issues to American debates about race, class, gender, religion, and empire.

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[10] To be sure, there are also spiritual battle raps among adherents of the subgenre of explicitly religious Hip Hop, but none were present in Gsann's BET cipha. For examples of the burgeoning literature on the intersection of religion and Hip Hop, see Eric Dyson, *Between God and Gangsta Rap: Bearing Witness to Black Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996); Anthony B. Pinn, ed., *Noise and Spirit: The Religious and Spiritual Sensibilities of Rap Music* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2003); Imani Perry, *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Felicia M. Miyakawa, *Five Percenter Rap: God Hop's Music, Message, and Black Muslim Mission* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005); Daniel White Hodge, *The Soul of Hip Hop: Rims, Timbs, and a Cultural Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010).

[11] Jacob K. Olupona, and Regina Gemignani, eds., *African Immigrant Religions in America* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2007).

[12] Eric S. Charry, "A Capsule History of African Rap," in: *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, edited by Eric S. Charry (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 3f. On emcees as modern griots, see Patricia Tang, "The Rapper as Modern Griot: Reclaiming Ancient Traditions," in: *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, edited by Eric S. Charry (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 79-91.

A-TOWN TO ATL

The BET producers made sure to present Gsann's performance within the all-African American cipha as a "natural" extension of global Hip Hop culture. And yet, the fact that his rap was subtitled into English points to tensions within the linguistic contact zone of the cipha that reflect broader tensions between the African American community and newer waves of African immigrants. Just as some voices within the African American community are concerned about protecting their perceived discursive monopoly on such issues as the memory of slavery and the continuing reality of racism, the globalization of Hip Hop has complicated the neat narrative of its origins among African American inner-city youth in the late 1970s South Bronx. To these cultural gatekeepers, Hip Hop from Africa poses not only a conceptual, but, more importantly, also an identity problem. What does it mean, after all, for young urban African Americans when Canadian-Somali emcee K'Naan counters the glorification of violence in American gangsta rap by saying that "in my country, everyone is in that condition?"[13] Gsann, it seems, is not the only African emcee with translation problems in the United States.

No less significantly, Gsann reintroduces the metaphor of the ship—*jahazi* in Swahili—in this age of global air travel. It should be obvious to all who are watching Gsann's performance that he has not arrived at the BET Hip Hop Awards in Atlanta by ship. Gsann's use of the metaphor, however, evokes a host of historical associations. As Paul Gilroy has suggested, the metaphor of the ship conjures up violent as well as liberating images for people in the African Diaspora. For Gilroy, the ship signifies, on the one hand, the violence and death of the Middle Passage that African slaves had to endure. On the other hand, it also denotes the transatlantic cultural flows that sustained slaves and continue to sustain their descendants across the Black Atlantic.[14]

The history of Gsann's land of birth, Tanzania, forces us to expand Gilroy's privileging of the Atlantic Ocean to incorporate the various economic, cultural, and linguistic influences that Arab, Indian, Chinese, and European ships have brought to the eastern seaboard of Africa. In Swahili, the word *jahazi* is generally used to describe a large sailing ship, traditionally used for trading goods across the Indian Ocean. These trading ships not only brought back goods, ideas, and people from other parts of the Indian Ocean world, but they also exported Swahili culture abroad. Seen in this light, Gsann's performance in the BET cipha parallels the historical role of the *jahazi* connecting Swahili cultures with faraway places.

Furthermore, Gsann's referencing of the *jahazi* provides a powerful semantic contact zone between his Tanzanian background and the cultural memory of his African American co-performers. However, Gsann does not make the physical violence and cultural repression that European ships brought to Tanzania explicit in his rhymes; an elision that further distinguishes him from the traditional battle rhymes of his

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[13] Alastair Pennycook, and Tony Mitchell, "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy," in: *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 31.

[14] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 4.

African American colleagues.[15] In Swahili, the term *jahazi* is usually not used to denote ships of European origin and the violence they brought with them. On the contrary, *jahazi* is an indigenous symbol and a source of pride among coastal Tanzanians. In the metaphor of the ship, then, Gsann's local *roots* in Tanzania connect with the global *routes* of contemporary Hip Hop culture.[16] At the same time, Gsann's use of the metaphor also exposes the limits of cultural translation since the ship mobilizes different historical and cultural registers within his American and African audience. Even though it was not a ship that has transported Gsann physically into the BET cipha, the historical richness of the metaphor of the ship allows him to join the imagined community of African American Hip Hop.

The geographical as well as cultural mobility that Gsann foregrounds in his rap also reflects the broader cultural realities of East Africa, both past and present. For centuries, Tanzanians have been travelling both within their country and beyond looking for a better life. In their quest for opportunity, the ship has been one of the foremost modes of transportation for Gsann's migrating fellow countrymen. As historian Sidney Lemelle has noted, the concept of *msafiri* (traveler) continues to play an important role in Swahili folklore and popular culture.[17] Thus, the pervasiveness of the theme of travel and mobility in Tanzanian culture grounds Gsann's metaphor of the ship in the concrete realities of his home country's past and present, lending his rhymes cultural authenticity.

Finally, the dynamics within the BET cipha deserve a closer analysis. It is noteworthy that there are no women among the participating emcees nor among the Hip Hop emcees in the background. While this absence could be justified given the underrepresentation of popular female Hip Hop artists today, some of the earliest pioneers in the United States were female emcees such as Roxanne Shante and Sister Souljah. Likewise in Tanzania, female artists such as Zay B and Nakaaya are breaking down long-standing gender prejudices with their powerful music, especially in urban centers.[18] One of the members of the X Plastaz, Gsann's sister Dineh, is a skilled emcee in her own right and contributes a significant part to their mesmerizing stage performances.[19] If the conscious re-enactment of the old-school cipha at the BET

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[15] This violent past becomes more explicit in Gsann's crew name. Echoing Malcolm Little's name change, the letter "X" in "X Plastaz" draws attention to the unknown numbers of African victims of slavery, Euro-American colonialism, and continued capitalist exploitation.

[16] African linguist Katrina D. Thompson makes a similar point about the X Plastaz' attempt to occupy a place between their Tanzanian roots and international popularity. Cf. Katrina D. Thompson, "Reality and Representation in Maasai Hip-Hop," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 20:1 (2008): 39.

[17] Sidney Lemelle, "'Ni Wapi Tunakwenda': Hip Hop Culture and the Children of Arusha," in: *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, edited by Dipannita Basu, and Sidney Lemelle (London, UK: Pluto, 2006), 231.

[18] Alex Perullo, "Imitation and Innovation in the Music, Dress, and Camps of Tanzanian Youth," in: *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, edited by Eric S. Charry (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 207 n18.

[19] Katrina D. Thompson, "Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and 'Local Maasai Flavors': Interviews with X Plastaz," in: *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader*, edited by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 291.

Awards was aiming for historical accuracy, at least a few female emcees should have been included.

However, gender constructions are at play also in the lyrics of the emcees. Echoing on-going debates in the United States, there is a fierce debate raging in contemporary Tanzanian Hip Hop over the use of sexually explicit, if not outright misogynist, song lyrics. The centrality of Islam in most Swahili rap contrasts sharply with misogynist representations of women by some Tanzanian gangsta rappers such as Dully Sykes, whose 2001 release 'Nyambizi' (slang for a voluptuous woman), was too sexually explicit for Tanzanian radio stations to play.[20] Despite (or rather because) of this public outcry, Sykes sold quite a few singles of the song. Beyond religious concerns, most Tanzanian emcees also share a general didactic purpose on the microphone, which prompts them to tone down overly sexual and violent lyrics.

As Kenyan ethnomusicologist Mwenda Ntarangwi notes, the "most defining attribute of Hip Hop is its increased localization, where it not only represents local realities in local languages but also follows local structures and expectations of social decorum."[21] Sexually explicit or overly violent Hip Hop lyrics are a case in point. In many East African countries where religion—particularly Pentecostal Christianity and Islam—plays a central role in ordering society the fact that some American Hip Hop artists liberally rap about sex, drugs, and violence, has triggered a heated debate about the limits of cultural translation. Some Tanzanian Hip Hop groups (including the X Plastaz) define their music in contrast to mainstream Hip Hop reaching their airwaves from the United States. Tanzanian emcee Dola Soul illustrates this representational gap when he says that "Hip Hop shouldn't be all about 'I shot your mom…' People are dying out there in the streets, people are executed in countries. We want to bring out messages in our rap and tell the people what is going on and how we can change the world to make it a better place to live in."[22] X Plastaz' political project aims to avoidstatements that denigrate women or glorify violence.[23]

The refusal by many Tanzanian emcees to imitate gangsta rap rhetoric from the United States can be further traced back to the stylistic conventions of ancient Swahili poets. According to historian José Arturo Saavedra Casco, these ancient Swahili poets "believed that their works should contribute positive messages to the community through sophisticated prosodic rules and an elegant use of the language."[24] Pre-colonial Swahili poets incorporated local themes and social concerns into their works and participated—like Gsann centuries later—in composition contests (*mashindano*) that were staged during public festivities: "Contenders had to compose verses replying to

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[20] Lemelle, "Hip Hop Culture and the Children of Arusha," 240.

[21] Mwenda Ntarangwi, *East African Hip Hop: Youth Culture and Globalization* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 21.

[22] Cit. in ibid.

[23] See, for instance, Katrina D. Thompson, "Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and 'Local Maasai Flavors': Interviews with X Plastaz," in: *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader*, edited by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 274.

[24] José Arturo Saavedra Casco, "The Language of the Young People: Rap, Urban Culture, and Protest in Tanzania," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 41, no. 3 (2006): 235.

what their opponents previously said."[25] The custom of reciting improvised verses at weddings and similar celebrations has survived until the present day. As this historical background shows, Gsann's participation in the BET cipha is part of a long cultural tradition in Tanzania dating back to pre-colonial times.

The Politics of Translation: Swahili Rhymes in Atlanta

Gsann's presence within the core of an art form traditionally associated with African Americans raises the question of translation. After his performance, Gsann reflected on his own positionality in the linguistic contact zone between English and Swahili:

> Many people were blown away with what I did and asked me why I rhymed in Swahili, 'cause they wanted to understand. I was just like "English is not my first language, I speak it, I love it, but you will be able to mess me up if I rhyme in English." There were emcees from all over the world in one setting, and I was happy to represent for Africa. I wasn't star struck, just glad to showcase what I did and could do with my American counterparts. I mean, think of it, we really have the same names, just one word changes, African American and African, do you understand what that means?[26]

Unfortunately, Gsann has not directly commented on his involvement in the English subtitles, but it is likely that he was consulted by the BET producers.

Since the founding members of the X Plastaz, including Gsann, were born and raised in Arusha in northern Tanzania where Swahili is the dominant language of commerce and everyday life, Gsann's use of Swahili is hardly surprising.[27] It was not until 1997 when Maasai singer Merege joined the crew that the X Plastaz started incorporating Maasai lyrics, musical traditions, and dressing styles into their performances.[28] Like in many other parts of the world, pioneering Tanzanian emcees, too, started introducing the new musical style of Hip Hop by rapping in English before adapting the American original to their local circumstances and linguistic particularities.[29] Some early innovators, such as Saleh J, then began to take the English rhymes they encountered on imported mixtapes and translated them into Swahili.[30] In contrast to the urban working-class origins of American Hip Hop, this original act of

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Gesthuizen, "Tanzanian Emcee in BET Hip Hop Awards Cipha."

[27] In a 2006 interview with applied linguist Katrina D. Thompson, Gsann said that Swahili is his first language before he learned Haya, Maa, and English. Katrina D. Thompson, "Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and 'Local Maasai Flavors': Interviews with X Plastaz," in: *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader*, edited by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 264.

[28] Alex Perullo, "Imitation and Innovation in the Music, Dress, and Camps of Tanzanian Youth," in: *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, edited by Eric S. Charry (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 190.

[29] Alex Perullo, *Live from Dar es Salaam: Popular Music and Tanzania's Music Economy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), 164f.

[30] Lemelle, "Hip Hop Culture and the Children of Arusha," 236.

translation from English to Swahili was made possible by the fact that the majority of the early Tanzanian Hip Hop fans and practioners came from middle-class backgrounds, understood English, and had the financial means to buy American records or even travel there.[31] These Tanzanian Hip Hop pioneers served as the first generation of translators who paved the way for Hip Hop culture to take root in eastern Africa.

The use of Swahili, however, has also to be seen as a political move in the context of the role of Swahili in Tanzanian history and Tanzania's official policy of English-Swahili bilingualism. After independence in 1961, Tanzania's first prime minister Julius Nyerere promoted a socialist project known as *ujamaa* (family hood), which made Swahili the basis of national culture.[32] Due to the long history of Swahili as the *lingua franca* of central and eastern Africa, the rhymes of the X Plastaz can today be understood throughout the region. This, at least, partly accounts for the regional success of *bongo flava* rap in Tanzania, both in its more party-oriented, sexually explicit, and commercial variants and the more socially conscious and politically informed Hip Hop of the X Plastaz.[33]

And yet, Tanzanian emcees, like their counterparts across Africa, are confronted with a linguistic paradox, as ethnomusicologist Eric Charry has noted: "The more they shape the genre to reflect and express their own experience, the more they rely on African languages and the less their chances of being understood by an international audience."[34] Despite the exceptional status of Swahili as a language with more than a hundred times more non-native speakers than native speakers, the approximately 100 million Swahili speakers worldwide remain predominantly located in central and eastern Africa, even though recent emigration to North America has increased the Swahili-speaking diaspora outside of Africa.[35] Swahili Hip Hop groups can, thus, rely on a rather large audience in close proximity, but are confronted with a linguistic barrier beyond eastern Africa. The decision of the BET producers to provide English subtitles for Gsann's Swahili rhymes illustrates this language gap.

Seen in historical perspective, the English subtitles expose a tension between the political uses to which Swahili and English have been put over the course of Tanzanian history. On the one hand, the use of Swahili can be read as a political and cultural act of empowerment on the part of Tanzanian rappers. Over the course of the 1990s, "Swahili

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[31] Ibid.

[32] For an overview of the history of Swahili, see Alamin M. Mazrui, and Ibrahim N. Shariff, *The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of an African People* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994).

[33] Gsann clearly distances himself and his crew's music from *bongo flava*. Cf. Katrina D. Thompson, "Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and 'Local Maasai Flavors': Interviews with X Plastaz," in: *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader*, edited by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 265. On *bongo flava*, see Koen Stroeken, "Immunizing Strategies: Hip-Hop and Critique in Tanzania," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 75, no. 4 (2005): 488-509.

[34] Eric S. Charry, "Music for an African Twenty-First Century," in: *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, edited by Eric S. Charry (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 292.

[35] John M. Mugane, *The Story of Swahili: Identity and the Geopolitics of Language* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, forthcoming), iii.

became the more powerful language choice within the Hip Hop scene because of a desire among youth to build a national Hip Hop culture that promoted local rather than foreign values, ideas, and language."[36] Even though not explicitly included in anthropologist Kelly M. Askew's groundbreaking study of the relationship between music and Tanzanian national identity, Hip Hop played a vital part in performing the Tanzanian nation.[37] If, according to Askew, "the continual accommodation of foreign elements" is a "key Swahili trait," then Tanzanian Hip Hop culture is one of the best illustrations for its inclusive character.[38]

Over time, as ethnomusicologists Alex Perullo and John Fenn have noted, Tanzanian emcees have grown adept at using English to rap about the positive aspects of life—including their own skills—and Swahili to highlight the social problems in Tanzanian society.[39] Swahili's historical development into a widely used language of economic, religious, and cultural exchange has made it highly malleable and adaptable to new influences.[40] In many ways similar to English, Swahili's flexibility provides an ideal linguistic platform for a global, heterogeneous, and dynamic cultural practice such as Hip Hop. Indeed, Saleh J, the winner of the *Yo! Rap Bonanza*, held in Dar es Salaam in 1990, won this first national rap competition by rapping partly in Swahili.[41]

On the other hand, however, the English subtitles can be seen as an attempt to reclaim Gsann's Swahili rhymes for a primarily American audience. English, after all, was not only the language of the former British colonizers of Tanzania, but also remains the dominant language of American Hip Hop and globalization. The act of translation from the original Swahili to English thus violently breaks up a cluster of cultural memories about language and power.[42] If the use of African American Vernacular English by African American Hip Hop artists mobilizes a specific historical and cultural register in American society, the use of Swahili in Tanzanian Hip Hop conjures up the specters of European colonialism and American cultural hegemony. In a sense, every act of translation can be seen as an act of conquest.[43] While translating Hip Hop lyrics

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[36] Alex Perullo, and John Fenn, "Language Ideologies, Choices, and Practices in Eastern African Hip Hop," in: *Global Pop, Local Language*, edited by Harris M. Berger, and Michael Thomas Carroll (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 33.

[37] Kelly M. Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[38] Ibid., 66.

[39] Alex Perullo, and John Fenn, "Language Ideologies, Choices, and Practices in Eastern African Hip Hop," in: *Global Pop, Local Language*, edited by Harris M. Berger, and Michael Thomas Carroll (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2003), 20.

[40] Mugane, *Story of Swahili*, 17.

[41] Eric S. Charry, "A Capsule History of African Rap," in: *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, edited by Eric S. Charry (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012), 15.

[42] Alastair Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 107.

[43] Among the first, Nietzsche described the practice of ancient Roman poets who translated Greek works as yet another Roman conquest: "In those days, indeed," he wrote in *Gay Science* in 1882, "to translate meant to conquer [...] And all this was done with the very best conscience as a member of the Roman Empire without realizing that such action constituted theft." Cit. in Rainer Schulte, and John

from outside of the United States into English necessarily does violence to the original language with its peculiar vocabulary, tempo, and style, the specific relationship between English and Swahili in Tanzanian history makes the BET subtitles a special case of linguistic re-conquest.

More specifically, the English subtitling hearkens back to the historical connections of the African American community with Swahili. As linguist John Mugane reminds us, Swahili has exerted considerable influence on the cultural imagination of African Americans, from Maulana Karenga's invented tradition of *Kwanzaa* to the late LeRoi Jones's name change to Amiri Baraka to the use of Swahili as a code language by African American street gangs.[44] Seen against this historical backdrop, the performance of a Tanzanian emcee freestyling in Swahili alongside African Americans highlights the complicated relationship between African and African American cultural production. If African Americans' long-standing fascination with Swahili represents a crucial context for Gsann's presence at the BET Hip Hop Awards, the decision to translate his Swahili rhymes into English can only partly be explained by concerns about the language barrier, but reveals more about the cultural politics between African and African American artists at large. Given the long-standing African American fascination with Swahili culture, it seems hardly a coincidence that the first African emcee to appear at the BET Hip Hop Awards raps in Swahili.

Significantly, Gsann's rap made use of the standard form of Swahili taught in Tanzanian schools. In contrast to the linguistic mix of various East African languages, Arabic, and English that other Tanzanian and Kenyan emcees use in their lyrics, Gsann refrains from inserting lexical markers in English that might help his audience better understand him. The idiosyncratic and highly dynamic mixture between Swahili and English, also known as "Swanglish," is prevalent among young urban Tanzanians, many of whom also participate in Hip Hop culture. As cultural historian Maria Suriano has shown, young Tanzanian Hip Hop artists "contribute to the spread of new slang terms, and 'Swanglish' words […], while on the other hand [adopting] street language in their hits […], and in this way [contribute] to its 'institutionalization'."[45] The X Plastaz do have recorded songs in which they creatively mix different languages (English, Swahili, and Maa) and linguistic codes (street Swahili, urban slang, and standard Swahili).

Given the group's linguistic diversity, Gsann's use of standard Swahili in the BET cipha stands out as a conscious act of cultural self-positioning. As he himself explained in an interview after the awards ceremony, Gsann is fluent in English as well as in the more urban forms of Swahili prevalent among east African Hip Hop practitioners, but in the cipha with African American emcees he chose to rap in Standard Swahili. In an earlier interview, Gsann had already stressed the importance of

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Biguenet, eds., *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 69.

[44] Mugane, *Story of Swahili*, 145ff.

[45] Maria Suriano, "'Mimi Ni Msanii, Kioo Cha Jamii': Urban Youth Culture in Tanzania as Seen Through Bongo Fleva and Hip-Hop," *Swahili Forum* 14 (2007): 210.

language when performing abroad: "When we are in foreign countries we have to use extra energy in order to please and satisfy our fans" because most listeners could not understand Swahili.[46] This insistence on the use of a "pure" Swahili can be read as a reaction against BET's attempt to protect the cultural hegemony of African Americans over the art form of Hip Hop.

Conclusion

To be sure, the inclusion of the non-American emcee Gsann within the commercial spectacle and cultural navel-gazing of the BET Hip Hop Awards attests to a growing awareness of Hip Hop's global reach. But at the same time, Gsann's self-awareness of his unlikely presence and peripheral position in Hip Hop's cultural center allows him to successfully elude the centripetal force of American Hip Hop. Even though the BET producers probably welcomed Gsann's rhymes in his exotic yet somewhat familiar native tongue of Swahili, rapping in English would certainly have helped Gsann to bring his message across to the worldwide audience watching the show. With his decision to use his native tongue of Swahili, Gsann marked off his own turf in the African American cipha and put his native Tanzania on the map of contemporary global Hip Hop culture.

Gsann's use of Swahili combined with his emphasis on religion and his global travels disrupts the grand narrative of Hip Hop's birth in the South Bronx and its subsequent diffusion throughout the world. Gsann's rap uncovered the local roots of "African Hip Hop from the cradle of civilization: Arusha, Tanzania, East Africa," as the X Plastaz' website proudly proclaims. As this case study of an artist from Tanzania has shown, Hip Hop's global journey has united Hip Hop artists around the world, but the linguistic conflicts of the past and the commercial imperatives of the present remain. If there is power in diversity, this power needs to be directed more forcefully against the homogenizing forces of the marketplace. The X Plastaz, for their part, are trying to resist the demands of the Tanzanian music industry and refuse to pay bribes to radio deejays and television hosts to play their songs.[47] Even though Gsann's performance within the African American cipha was presented as a natural extension of American Hip Hop, the fact that his rap was translated into English raises broader questions about the contested politics of translation in global Hip Hop culture. The 2009 BET cipha, in the end, illustrates the creative ways in which a Tanzanian emcee made sense of his cultural and linguistic journey from A-Town to ATL.

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[46] Katrina D. Thompson, "Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and 'Local Maasai Flavors': Interviews with X Plastaz," in: *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader*, edited by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 265.

[47] Katrina D. Thompson, "Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and 'Local Maasai Flavors': Interviews with X Plastaz," in: *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader*, edited by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011), 266.

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Book Reviews

Hip Hop on Film: Performance Culture, Urban Space, and Genre Transformation in the 1980s.
By Kimberly Monteyne. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2013. Pp. x, 256. $54; Kindle $37.19.

I have loved watching movies for as long as I can remember. As a small child, I sat in front of the television watching classic black and white film. Many of my teen years were spent at the movie theater or plastered in front of a television watching HBO and Cinemax. Present day, the same can be said for Netflix, Youtube.com and me. Musicals, independent, foreign, thrillers, avant-garde, and documentaries, are the genres I look for first when making a selection. I was delighted, to say the least, to read *Hip Hop on Film, Performance, Culture, Urban Space and Genre Transformation in the 1980s.* The book introduced me to classic movies that I was able to find and watch while reminding me of other movies I watched years ago. Enthralled in *Hip Hop on Film,* I was inspired to multitask – reading and taking notes while watching Hip Hop musicals.

Beginning with pre-Hip Hop musical influencers, author Kimberly Monteyne describes African American roles in films that date back to the early 20th century. Monteyne points out how in the initial days of film, strategically placed Black performers in musicals could be edited out to suit Southern movie theater owners and their patrons. The essence of the book explores a lesser-known category of Hip Hop musicals as a genre that has its role in film history.

As Monteyne explains in the introduction, Hip Hop culture has made a mark in society, academia, and the movie industry. Underground messages of societal woes from Latino and African American performers were performed in movie theaters. Higher education took note of the culture and its effects. Accordingly, film producers featured Latino and African American street performers alongside performers who were considered a part of a more disciplined art form. Some Hip Hop films of the genre included rappers with political messages.

Hip Hop music and Hip Hop musicals were not widely viewed among mainstream audiences thirty-five years ago. Through rapping, DJing, graffiti writing, and break dancing, these musicals helped to spread the message of disenfranchised urban youth to people all over the world.

Monteyne proves early on in the book that Hip Hop movies have elements consistent with the musical genre. In chapter one, Monteyne lists several Hip Hop themed features that contain elements of musicals. Reminded of the names of such musicals, *Wild Style* and *Flashdance* are two Hip Hop musicals available for view on Netflix. Free viewing of *Rappin'*, *Breakin'*, and *Body Rock* are available on Youtube.com. Other Hip Hop movies mentioned in the book are available at a cost on Youtube.com.

Although earlier films that included African American actors were explored, *Hip Hop on Film* delves into a side to musicals that mainstream moviegoer were not

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accustomed to in the 1980s. Hip Hop musicals in *Hip Hop on Film* shows a side of life unfamiliar to many who neither lived in nor visited an urban community.

Dilapidated buildings, poor living conditions, graffiti spray-painted on walls and trains, and people breakdancing on the street make some Hip Hop musicals different from musicals audiences were accustomed to seeing. While watching some of these films years ago, musical was not the category I would have placed Hip Hop movies. Armed with a different perspective, watching these Hip Hop movies again took on a new meaning. Hip Hop musicals tell a part of the story through rapping, breaking, graffiti writing and DJing.

Musicals (as we know it) tell a part of the story through songs, dance, and orchestra. Consequently, Monteyne notes Hip Hop movies also included the conflict, the love story, and the music and dance aspects that classical musicals use.

Social issues were significant to the 1980s Hip Hop culture. It seems befitting to include social issues in Hip Hop musicals. Monteyne makes a distinction between "true Hip Hop musical" - and "surface Hip Hop musical" (p. 47). These terms are significant to readers of the book who are unfamiliar with each movie discussed. When viewing this style of movie, the terms help one put each movie into perspective. Then the viewer can determine if the movie is truly a Hip Hop musical.

Wild Style (1983) is referred to throughout the book, but chapter two focuses solely on the Hip Hop movie and its impact as a musical. Pointing out the central character is neither a rapper nor dancer, the movie features several full rap songs performed by rap artists. Also featured were choreographed performances by break-dancers. Comparing to elements of classical musicals, Monteyne describes what sets *Wild Style* apart from all musicals.

Ever since there have movie theaters, there have been films that pack in droves of teenagers. Trendy teens often mimicked what they saw on the big screen. Teens were influenced by big screen fashion. The 1980s brought about different scenarios for the younger crowd. Many of the movies were about beautiful people and their beautiful lifestyles – rich kids living in the suburbs. There was little diversity in those films 30 to 40 years ago. However, scenes from Hip Hop musicals were not perfect or filled with beautiful people living in beautiful homes.

Chapter three, *Hip Hoppers and Valley Girls*, discusses how films that included rapping, breaking, and DJing launched trends. While mainstream movies showed scenes where youth spent time at the mall; Hip Hop musicals of the era sent another message. Urban youth musicals expressed levels of creativity through performance on walls and trains and street and club.

Additionally, the book quantifies 1980s Hip Hop movies alongside favorite mainstream movies targeting teens. Movie houses with multiple theaters attracted under one roof crowds of people interested in mainstream movies and Hip Hop movies. *Hip Hop on Film* notes the popularity of the Hip Hop style musical. Eventually, some of these types of movies became box office hits and influenced a later more successful musical with a female lead character, which was not seen in earlier Hip Hop musicals. *Flashdance* featured a female lead character trying to move from club

performances to classical performances with the ballet. That is the gist of chapter four – diverse contributions in Hip Hop film. While men were featured performers in most Hip Hop musicals, Monteyne notes the impact women had behind the scenes. The author names specific women who were important in the breakdance choreography for these film.

All four chapters of *Hip Hop on Film* include pertinent details that ascribe to the relevance of Hip Hop musical history. The diversity aspect is evident as Monteyne discusses race, gender, socio-economic background and social and political stances. The book is an informative read of historical value to a variety field of studies. Monteyne makes a persuasive case for the Hip Hop musical in this well-researched text.

Renette Smith McCargo is an Academic Advisor and Career Coordinator for the College of Media and Communication and adjunct instructor in the Department of Media at Arkansas State University. Her research interests include the portrayal of print literacy in children's television programming, eWord of Mouth or consumer-generated content in social media and cyberbullying.

Policing the Campus: Academic Repression, Surveillance, and the Occupy Movement.
Edited by Anthony J. Nocella II and David Gabbard. New York, N.Y.: Peter Lang, 2013. Pp. vii, 223. Paperback $39.95

In fourteen chapters there is solid evidence of there being increased policing and surveillance on college and university campuses in California, Indiana, Virginia, Illinois and across the nation.

Some of the documented evidence shows the policing of campuses to the point of arrests, tasers, and pepper spray. This evidence also shows the increase in the use of surveillance cameras along with campus-wide alert systems that also can be used for surveillance.

Jason Del Gandio, one of the article researchers, wrote, "…it is obvious that student protets are commonly met with police repression. More times than not, school administrations authorize such repression" (p. 6).

First, the photo on the cover of the book gives a clear indication that police and law enforcement are pretty much the bad guys, the terrorists, in these case studies and articles. The photo is of a police officer pepper spraying some students who are sitting on the sidewalk. The photo also shows how any and everybody with a camera these days can capture what is happening. There are four cell phones and tablets and three cameras visibly capturing the event.

Also, the book's dedication sets the tone for the body of work. In part it says, "This book is for all of those who demand a free democratic critical inclusive education for social justice, void of guns, police, security, and surveillance."

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The book's Foreword is written by Christian Parenti, a correspondent for The Nation who has a Ph.D. in sociology from the London School of Economics. Co-editor David Gabbard wrote the Introduction ("Canary in the Coal Mine?") that shows how insightful political journalist Hunter S. Thompson was about criminalizing college students who were activists and dissidents on college and university campuses.

Meanwhile, the book is divided into three parts.

Part I, *Campus Police*, has five articles that include topics about the arrests of student activists, many times after surveillance and instilled fear.

Part II, *The Surveilled Campus*, also has five articles, which focus on the erosion of privacy for students because of increased and technologically savvy police scrutiny.

Four articles are in Part III, *From Defending Public Education to the Occupy Movement*, and include discussions about the Occupy Movement that began on Wall Street in New York City, and heavy-handed policing tactics on college campuses.

Nevertheless, this compilation of research articles gives a thorough overview of what has been happening on college and university campuses in Iowa, New York, Minnesota and across the nation since the overall increase in surveillance.

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The End of Prisons: Reflections from the Decarceration Movement.
Edited by Mechtild E. Nagel, and Anthony J. Nocella. New York, N. Y.: Rodopi, 2013. Pp. xv, 248. paperback $63.86.

This collection of essays distinguishes itself from similar publications in both its focus and scope in two significant ways. First, while its contributors, as part of the Decarceration Movement, share an interest in prison reform (meaning improved conditions and treatment of incarcerated populations), they are far more concerned with the total abolition of prisons in the U. S. and abroad. Secondly, much like Michelle Alexander's renowned monolith, *The New Jim Crow,* many of its contributors are also concerned with the logistics of incarceration (i.e. which populations are incarcerated, the implications of incarceration on social justice issues, etc.). However, in *The End of Prisons*, the prison industrial complex and racial injustice are only the proverbial tip of the prison iceberg.

Perhaps its boldest intervention is to redefine "the carceral," not in terms of brick and mortar buildings with bars, but rather as any site of social control. Drawing from the likes of Michel Foucault, Angela Y. Davis, W. E. B. DuBois, et.al, each selection conceptually enlarges our understanding of "prison," thus enabling each scholar/activists to address myriad overlapping and intersecting social justice issues, their origins, capacity, and potential solutions. The scholarship of the editors, Mechtild

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Nagel and Anthony Nocella, provide the introduction, the first, and the final essays of thirteen chapters, laying the foundation for and framing the remaining scholarship. In the introduction, for example, Nagel and Nocella define an incarcerated subject as any subject who "live[s] under the systems of oppression such as the violence of poverty, racism, sexism, internalized colonialism, ableism, trans- and homophobia" (5). Armed with a scathing critique of social control through the lens of the Occupy Wall Street movement, Nagel and Nocella assert that by examining the way the state responds to social protest, we can more fully understand social control and "dominant oppressive authoritarian positions"(3). For these scholars, social control and incarceration are nearly interchangeable terms and explicitly a function of institutions and larger systems, such as imperialism, capitalism, or sexism.

Other essays of note critique institutions commonly perceived as helpful, such as schools and mental institutions, the link between immigration law and the war on terror, and three essays with a focus on the management of "nonhuman animals" as a kind of prison. The essays on nonhuman animals permit intersectional approaches that reveal interesting links between capitalism and science, and between anthropocentrism and patriarchy.

Largely, *The End of Prisons* is an engaging, thoughtful, and provocative collaboration, offering interventions within the fields of Social Philosophy and Applied Philosophy, specifically, to Social Justice Studies in general, and most of all, to the burgeoning Decarceration Movement.

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