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Harris et al.: If I Ruled the World: Putting Hip Hop on the Atlas

# HIP HOP

STUDIES

## If I Ruled the World: Putting Hip Hop on the Atlas



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## My Epitaph

“Here lies a man who loved virtue and art,  
And gave to both his fortunes and his heart.”

Ikeogu Oke  
(1967 - 2018)

This special issue is dedicated to Ikeogu Oke. The *Journal of Hip Hop Studies* recognizes the weight of publishing his poems on Tupac posthumously. He transitioned on November 25, 2018 during the process of bringing together this special issue. He wrote “My Epitaph” as a Facebook post on September 16, 2018. As his epitaph stated, he was passionate about art. Born in Nigeria, he went to the University of Calabar and obtained a BA in English and Literary Studies. He then went on to obtain an MA in Literary Studies from the University of Nigeria. Among his many accomplishments, in 2017, Oke won the Nigeria Prize for Literature for his book of epic poetry, *The Heresiad*. “If I Ruled the World” contains ten poems written by Oke. They are placed throughout the issue.

In Oke’s note on “Good Thing Going” in this special issue he stated: “I had imagined that it would be the type of poem Tupac himself would write if he were to write a formal poem/musical piece, with his characteristic bluntness and unabashedly mirroring the seamy side of our humanity, and which he would like to render as a song with the verve usually associated with rap or hip-hop.” His own words portray the beautiful struggles of African and African diasporic life that he had aimed to communicate in his own poetry. His poems elucidate the ways in which Hip Hop communicates and embodies the evasiveness of freedom for Black people around the world. Oke, from Nigeria, and Tupac, from America, were separated by a vast body of water in the Atlantic, yet they have this shared experience of being African people in the ongoing fight against White Supremacy. They both are our ancestors now and we hope that this special issue will honor their work and legacies.



*In Loving Memory and Dedication to Ikeogu Oke  
(1967 - 2018)*

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## Foreword

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*Travis Harris*

My journey, in many ways, reflects the ciphaz and flows of this special issue, "If I Ruled the World: Putting Hip Hop on the Atlas." The idea for this special issue came from my time at what became known as "Grimey Cambridge," an international Hip Hop Studies conference at the University of Cambridge. This conference, held in 2016, formally entitled "It Ain't Where You're From, It's Where You're At," included Hip Hop scholars from around the world. This opened my eyes to a world of Hip Hop Studies that had previously eluded me. With this newfound revelation, I thought that I should put out a special issue on international Hip Hop. I then reached out to Daniel White Hodge and Simran Singh. Hodge and I intentionally reached out to a woman and someone from outside of the United States in order to ensure that this special issue was not dominated by a male US-centric perspective.

With the team in place, I started the literature review. Quickly I discovered that this body of literature on global Hip Hop studies was massive. I reached out to the network of Hip Hop scholars I had developed from "Grimey Cambridge" and asked for contributions to a global Hip Hop studies bibliography.

We have included this bibliography in this special issue. Working on this bibliography has revealed the complexities of Hip Hop and Hip Hop studies. Hip Hop is being researched in multiple languages, from various academic disciplines and according to a number of methodological approaches. One component of the study of Hip Hop around the world is resources. Some scholars do not have the institutional support to fully study Hip Hop. This support ranges from access to other scholarly articles to access to Hip Hop scholars who are trained in the field. In true Hip Hop fashion, it is amazing to witness how Hip Hop is being thoroughly researched throughout the world.

The turning point in my understanding of global Hip Hop studies happened when I realized that global Hip Hop studies was solely an artificial boundary created by academia. Whereas I started thinking about international Hip Hop studies out there, I realized that Hip Hop has collapsed those boundaries. In reality, scholars and practitioners cipa and flow with each other across multiple boundaries. There is no "out there" in Hip Hop. Hip Hop did not go global, it has always been a global phenomenon from its inception. "If I Ruled the World" argues that there is no distinction between global Hip Hop studies and Hip Hop. Global Hip Hop studies is Hip Hop studies.

The compilation of "If I Ruled the World" consists of flows and a cipa in and of itself. The late and great Nigerian poet, Ikeogu Oke, blessed us with poems on Tupac Shakur. Oke's poems bring a new perspective to Tupac and positions Tupac as an African diasporic rapper. This perspective means that Tupac was (and still is) African. The shift in thinking from American to African living in a diaspora changes how we comprehend Tupac's identity and his reach around the world. My article "Can It Be Bigger Than Hip Hop," thoroughly examines Global Hip Hop Studies and lays out the overall argument for "If I Ruled the World: Putting Hip Hop on the Atlas." I contend for a third wave of Global Hip Hop Studies that builds on the work of the first two waves, identifies Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon, and aligns with Hip Hop where there are no boundaries between Hip Hop inside and outside of the United States. Joanna Daguirane Da Sylva adds to the cipa with her examination of Didier Awadi. Da Sylva's excellent work reveals the ways in which Hip Hoppa Didier Awadi elevates Pan-Africanism and uses Hip Hop as a tool to decolonize the minds of African peoples. The interview by Tasha Iglesias and myself of members of Generation Hip Hop and the Universal Hip Hop Museum provides a primary source and highlights two Hip Hop organizations with chapters around the world. Mich Yonah Nyawalo's "Negotiating French Muslim Identities through Hip Hop" details Hip Hop artists Médine and Diam's, who are both French and Muslim, and whose self-identification can be understood as political strategies in response to the French Republic's marginalization of Muslims. In "Configurations of Space and Identity in Hip Hop: Performing 'Global South,'" Igor Johannsen adds to this special issue an examination of the spatiality of the Global South and how Hip Hoppas in the Global South oppose global hegemony. The final essay, "'I Got the Mics On, My People Speak': On the Rise of Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop," by Benjamin Kelly and Rhyann Clapham, provides a thorough analysis of Aboriginal Hip Hop and situates it within postcolonialism. Overall, the collection of these essays points to the multiple identities, political economies, cultures, and scholarly fields and disciplines that Hip Hop interacts with around the world.

A special issue of this caliber requires a large contribution from a number of scholars. Inevitably, we will not be able to name everyone, but here is our best effort. We would like to thank the team of reviewers, they copyedited, reviewed essays, and provided excellent feedback: Ashley Payne, Deshonna Collier-Goubil, Jeffrey Coleman, Cassandra Chaney, Xiomara Forbez, David Leonard, Steve Gilbers, Quentin Williams, Kendra Salois, Velda Love, Sarah Napoli, Melvin Williams, Don Sawyer, Eileen O'Brien, Katharine R. Allen, Iyabo F. Osiapem, J. Griffith Rollefson, Sabine Kim and Brett Esaki. I also would like to shout out all who contributed to the bibliography: Greg Schick, Mich Nyawalo, Sara Little, Alex Stevenson, Steven Gilbers, Dave Hook, Alex Crooke, Mary Fogarty, James Cox, Kendra Salois, Anna Oravcová and Silhouette Bushay.

The coming together of "If I Ruled the World" consisted of ciphas and flows around the world, in and of itself. From its inception in Cambridge, the three co-editors are located in Virginia (Travis Harris), Chicago (Daniel White Hodge) and UK (Simran

Singh). The authors span the globe and are located in places such as Germany, Nigeria, and Sydney. The range in geographical locations also contributed to our understanding of scholarly norms and the English language. There were differences on when to use quotes and commas and these were tied both to the theoretical idea being discussed and the individual's conception of grammar. This made the copy editing, of which Sabine Kim did an excellent job leading, challenging. Kim is based in Mainz, Germany, which is a different time zone than the UK, East Coast and Midwest. An example that illustrates the flows that created this issue is Kim, Singh and I editing essays. I would send an essay to Kim, who would then send it to Singh. After Singh finished editing it, she would send it back to Kim who sent it back to me in order to go into the complete issue. Understandably, we are excited to finally present to you "If I Ruled the World: Putting Hip Hop on the Atlas!"





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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

A Sequence<sup>1</sup>

### No. 1: I Beg of You, Honey

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

I beg of you, honey,  
Don't beg me to part with money;  
Many I loaned have not paid;  
The sums are soaring in my head.

**Chorus:** Money's friends are long like a python.  
They swallow it and then it's gone.  
And if you fight them with a baton,  
The cons will fight back with a gun.

} *May be rapped  
or sung, like the  
rest of the lyrics*

Borrowers, like boa constrictors,  
Have strangled pity out of many.  
They take a loan and turn detractors  
Of those who cared to loan them money.

*Repeat chorus.*

So honey, buddy, dude and loved one,  
Don't call me a heart of stone.  
Go tell those I loaned before

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<sup>1</sup>**Author's Note:** The sense of this unconventional dedication is that I had always wanted to write a poem like this as a tribute to Tupac Shakur, whose music I love though I am not a great fan of rap music or Hip Hop, and whom I consider a highly gifted poet in his own right, the genius behind what I would call pop poetry as a respectable literary genre. The poem, written recently, is the realization of that aspiration, which I harbored for years since I first listened to Tupac's music, beginning with "Dear Mama" with the creative mix of the perfect and sporadic rhymes of its lyrics. I had imagined that it would be the type of poem Tupac himself would write if he were to write a formal poem/musical piece, with his characteristic bluntness and unabashed mirroring of the seamy side of our humanity, and which he would like to render as a song with the verve usually associated with rap or Hip Hop.

To pay before you come for more.

*Repeat chorus.*

They're quick to give a payback date;  
You soon realize they meant forever:  
Call them when their date is late;  
Do they answer? Never! Never!

*Repeat chorus.*

And yes their phones can ring and go off  
If they know it's you that's calling.  
How a sucker-lender's "love"  
Soon becomes a thing appalling!

*Repeat chorus.*

And go down to the place they're bunking;  
They lock the door – you think they're not in?  
You bruise your knuckles – Knocking! Knocking!  
And wonder: "Lender, what's my sin?"

*Repeat chorus.*

So honey, buddy, dude and loved one,  
I don't have a heart of stone.  
I'll wait for those I loaned before  
To pay before I lend you more.

*Repeat chorus.*

December 13, 2017



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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

#### No. 2: Whither World?

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

Where is the world going,  
With all its reaping without sowing?  
And where with those without a care  
That its ways with most are so unfair?

<b>Chorus:</b> Everywhere I look, I see a sign That aches and cramps this soul of mine. By the world's wrongs I'm so appalled That I stare and wonder, "Whither world?"	}	<i>May be rapped, preferably, or sung, like the rest of the lyrics.</i>
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Where is the world going,  
With many sowing without reaping,  
And rich folks who don't give a damn  
While they gain from such a scam?

*Repeat chorus.*

The slum of nations, the ghetto of minds,  
The chain of squalor that binds  
The poor – I still see these from where I am,  
And wish for a change that's not a sham.

*Repeat chorus.*

The earth may spin upon its axis;  
Orbit the sun, at the speed of light;  
But like those who slug its taxis,  
It's hard to advance with all its blight.

*Repeat chorus.*

And when will humans heed my call  
To make their planet fair for all,  
To let justice ascend their throne,  
That every dog may have its bone?

*Repeat chorus.*

A meaty bone to eat with play and pleasure,  
Rolling on the lawns with a sense of leisure,  
And without a leash from any master  
Waiting for its neck right there or after.

*Repeat chorus.*

A juicy bone to grind with play and pleasure,  
Hanging out alone with a sense of leisure,  
And without a chain for the happy creature,  
Happy with its lot and with man and nature.

*Repeat chorus.*

February 1, 2018

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

#### No. 3: Dear Mama

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

Mama, O dear Mama,  
You were a tough nail beneath their hammer;  
They knocked and knocked and you stood still,  
And proved your love with a strong will.

**Chorus:** Strong, resilient Mama,  
Unyielding beneath their hammer,  
I can say without a stammer:  
It could only have been Mama!

*To be sung,  
the other  
stanzas rapped*

Unbent, unfazed, unbroken,  
Your spirit was tough, your strength was oaken,  
The blows you bore went unspoken;  
A mere rock would have been broken!

*Repeat chorus.*

A mere steel nail would have  
Shattered, and turned to pulp beneath their hammer,  
And gone with my coffin unsung to the grave;  
But they couldn't even dent dear Mama.

*Repeat chorus.*

Yes, they couldn't dent dear Mama,  
A woman of steel harder than diamond,  
Yet soft like a berry and sweet like an almond;  
They couldn't dent her charm with their hammer.

*Repeat chorus.*

Bold, beautiful Mama,  
My Mama divine,  
I compare your taste without a stammer  
To the ultimate vintage wine.

*Repeat chorus.*

A mere rock would have melted, under  
Their fiery blows; a mere pearl split asunder,  
By the pounding of their strokes; but Mama,  
My dear Mama, stood unruffled by their hammer.

*Repeat chorus.*

And she did all that for her chum,  
And proved herself the world's best Mum,  
Standing tough against a system  
That'll break her child that's not like them.

*Repeat chorus.*

February 4, 2018



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## Can It Be Bigger Than Hip Hop?: From Global Hip Hop Studies to Hip Hop

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*Travis Harris*

### **Abstract**

Global Hip Hop Studies has grown tremendously since it started in 1984. Scholars from a number of disciplines have published numerous journal articles, books, dissertations and theses. They have also presented at multiple academic conferences and taught classes on global Hip Hop. “Can It Be Bigger Than Hip Hop?: From Global Hip Hop Studies to Hip Hop Studies” traces this history and examines the key authors, intellectual interventions, methods, and theories of this field. I used an interdisciplinary methodology entailing participant observations of local Hip Hoppas and the examination of more than five hundred scholarly texts that I assembled into a Global Hip Hop Studies bibliography. I conducted this study from the perspective of an Africana scholar who also identifies as Hip Hop. While analyzing Global Hip Hop Studies, I made two discoveries: scholars created artificial boundaries between Hip Hop Studies and Global Hip Hop Studies and they too narrowly focused on their specific region without accounting for Hip Hop’s global connections. As such, “Can It Be Bigger Than Hip Hop?” sets the tone for the special issue and lays out “If I Ruled the World’s” central argument: Global Hip Hop Studies is Hip Hop Studies. If we are to understand Hip Hop, we need to go beyond the United States. Moreover, Hip Hop is an African diasporic phenomenon that consists of multiple flows that create Hip Hop ciphaz around the world.

## Introduction

Can it be “bigger than Hip Hop?”<sup>1</sup> Think about the multiple ways scholars and Hip Hop heads have defined “Hip Hop.” The variety of explanations in and of itself are numerous. Moreover, several scholars and Hip Hoppas have discussed the depth of this phenomenon. The various conceptions of how we understand Hip Hop also entails race, ethnicity, religion, philosophy, feminism, sexuality, language, education, legislation, policies, politics, economics, popular culture, various media modalities, technology, the environment, and materiality. Any Hip Hop head would say that real Hip Hop is more than rap music.<sup>2</sup> Real Hip Hop is more than what is being played on the radio and television, trending on YouTube, at the top of the iTunes chart, or hot on Tidal. While there is no uniform perspective on what “real Hip Hop” is, it is clear that real Hip Hop is deeper than what is easily identifiable on the surface. Hip Hop is a global phenomenon: it is present in Havana and Paris, the Mississippi Delta and Rakvere, small rural towns in the Midwest and London, colleges and gym classes in elementary schools, after school programs and daycares, hoods in the United States and banlieues in France, Bucharest, and Tokyo, churches and mosques, studios in Nordweststadt and SWEM Media Center at the College of William and Mary, and countless number of cities, towns, buildings, streets, blocks, countries, and regions. From deejays to some of the most unlikely characters, such as Vladimir Putin, conservative Toshio Tamogami, Buddhist monk Kansho Tagai, Sri Lankan Tamil refugee and rapper M.I.A., and Indian b-girl Shawty Pink.<sup>3</sup> There are Hip Hoppas who know about M.I.A. and Toshio Tamogami, while others have never heard these names before. Each of these individuals have different relationships with Hip Hop and point to differing ways of understanding Hip Hop.

This multidimensional, multifaceted, interconnected, and dynamic perspective on Hip Hop<sup>4</sup> raises the question: How significantly does “global Hip Hop” contribute to what scholars and Hip Hoppas mean by “Hip Hop?” This is the overarching question of this special issue “If I Ruled the World.” I argue that Hip Hop/Hip Hop Studies cannot comprehensively understand Hip Hop without adequately accounting for “global Hip Hop.” Scholars and Hip Hoppas must think about Hip Hop from a global perspective and consider the many areas that intersect with Hip Hop.<sup>5</sup> Global Hip Hop Studies is Hip Hop Studies. Hip Hop Studies *is* Hip Hop. Global Hip Hop is Hip Hop (see figure 1). I

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<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that Dead Prez and the many scholars who quote them focus on shifting away from the stereotypical and demeaning notions of Hip Hop.

<sup>2</sup> When I say, “Hip Hop head,” I am referring to those in the culture who self-identify by this name and are keen to the arguments surrounding what is real Hip Hop. I use the term “Hip Hoppa” to refer to those whose identity is Hip Hop or are a part of the Hip Hop culture.

<sup>3</sup> Toshio Tamogami, the right-wing politician who Show-K would later support in the Tokyo Election. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDsrG6p7pAY>

<sup>4</sup> The “this” I am referring to are the many ways different people understand Hip Hop that I explain in the opening paragraph.

<sup>5</sup> As mentioned above, these intersections include Hip Hop and religion, gender, sexuality, and so on.

argue that if we fully understand global Hip Hop, then we will not think of global Hip Hop as something different than Hip Hop. Therefore, global Hip Hop is Hip Hop and global Hip Hop Studies should be understood as Hip Hop. While this argument is straightforward, the difficulty in presenting it lies in the variety of perspectives that define “Hip Hop.” In addition to not having a universal understanding within the Hip Hop culture, scholars also identify Hip Hop and the elements of Hip Hop differently.

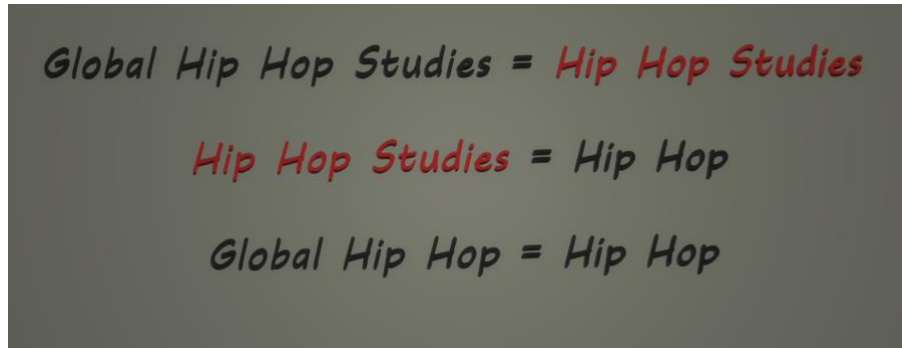


Fig. 1

Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal have provided a marquee point for Hip Hop studies with *That's the Joint: The Hip Hop Studies Reader* (2004). While there had already been a massive amount of scholarship at that point, numerous meetings around the world, classes, and an active presence of Hip Hop throughout the academy, Forman and Neal's reader provides a definition of Hip Hop Studies and brings together key pieces that had shaped the field. Forman states:

*With That's the Joint!, we assert that research and writing, whether in journalistic or academic contexts, is absolutely part of the wider hip-hop culture [italics in original]. Analyzing, theorizing, and writing about hip-hop are also forms of cultural labor and should accordingly be regarded as consequential facets of hip-hop. Hip-hop's first chroniclers were always more than dispassionate objective observers. They were in many cases fully implicated in the emergent culture of hip-hop, circulating within the same social circles as the prime innovators and entrepreneurs, and they counted themselves among the earliest audience members who cohered at both formal and informal events.*<sup>6</sup>

He reveals that the academic study of Hip Hop is Hip Hop. Since there is no separation between Hip Hop Studies and Hip Hop, what then, is Hip Hop?

### Hip Hop Identified

<sup>6</sup> Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, *That's the Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004) 3.

This hotly debated question has produced a plethora of answers that, due to the complex nature of Hip Hop, readers will respond to differently. Therefore, I contend for an adaptive and multifaceted definition that attempts to address the multiple ways of theorizing about Hip Hop. I believe our conception of Hip Hop should be adaptable because we have not fully thought of all the factors that thinking about Hip Hop globally brings. While, ideally, Hip Hop is Hip Hop Studies, there is a divide between the academy and the Hip Hop culture. The academy is behind. Hip Hop moves and transforms without boundaries, the academy still has global Hip Hop Studies as a subfield. The academy must catch up with the culture, and all parties involved can contribute to what we mean by “Hip Hop.”

My multilayered idea of Hip Hop builds on the existing definitions of Hip Hop. Due to the diversity of scholarship on Hip Hop, I will not rehash what has already been described. My definition of Hip Hop directly connects to my argument of enfolding global Hip Hop into Hip Hop. I am influenced by Lawrence “KRS-One” Parker, Gwendolyn D. Pough, and numerous scholars of global Hip Hop Studies. In “Ain’t It Evil to Live Backwards,” I explain KRS-One’s three different spellings of Hip Hop.<sup>7</sup> The most important aspect of KRS’ definition of Hip Hop that applies to my thinking about Hip Hop and global Hip Hop is his belief that Hip Hop is “a shared idea” that “does not appear in any physical reality” and “is outside of space and time.”<sup>8</sup> Also, KRS provides a hierarchical description of Hip Hop. He calls the “shared idea” “collective consciousness,” and when “collective consciousness is in action, it’s the culture.” When the culture is in action, it produces products.<sup>9</sup>

I am not attempting to proselytize, rather I would like to use the framework KRS provides in order to define Hip Hop. Starting with his notion of a “collective consciousness,” Pough makes a similar statement about Hip Hop that leads to thinking about it beyond space and time. She states: “Hip-Hop is a state of mind; a way of living and being that expands further than what kind of music one listens to. And there is power there, so much power that some people are scared of it.”<sup>10</sup> In light of the plethora of ways in which one sees the world, whether one believes in a metaphysical reality or not, KRS and Pough helps us to reach the unseen and provide a language to articulate the influences, motivations, and desires that are present throughout of Hip Hop.

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<sup>7</sup> Travis T. Harris and Cassandra D. Chaney, “Introduction: Ain’t It Evil to Live Backwards: A Hip Hop Perspective of Religion,” *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, Special Issue “Religion and Hip Hop And,” 5, no. 1 (2018): 8.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence “Kris” Parker (KRS-One), “40 Years of Hip Hop” - KRS 1 Lecture, *YouTube*, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYEgYnGVOwo>.

<sup>9</sup> Parker, “40 Years of Hip Hop.”

<sup>10</sup> Gwendolyn D. Pough, “Seeds and Legacies: Tapping the Potential in Hip-Hop,” in *That’s the Joint: Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 284.



Additionally, KRS' hierarchy provides room to think about the many ways in which people can be involved with Hip Hop and the level of commitment of their involvement. He explains that to really be Hip Hop, the Hip Hoppa must "be Hip Hop all the time," not just when convenient for them.<sup>11</sup> At the level of collective consciousness, where there is unseen power, KRS contends that Hip Hop questions the very identity of the Hip Hoppa and requires them to make a sacrifice in order to be fully Hip Hop. This classification of Hip Hop presents a spectrum. There are those who casually engage with the product, listening to rap music, watching Hip Hop movies and so on, but they are not making the full sacrifice in the way KRS explains. Then there are those who make the full sacrifice. The various levels of engagement points to the ways in which people all over the world (global) engage with Hip Hop and reveals how global Hip Hop is indeed Hip Hop.

In addition to how KRS and Pough describe Hip Hop, I build on the work of scholars who posit that Hip Hop is an African diasporic phenomenon. Numerous scholars have identified the African continuities and contributions to Hip Hop using Paul Gilroy's notion of a "Black Atlantic," and while they recognize the African roots, they still identify Hip Hop as an African American popular culture. This is where I differ and aim to move the field forward. I contend that a continual focus on Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon is necessary to collapsing global Hip Hop into Hip Hop. Also, I argue that we should go "beyond" the Black Atlantic and utilize Paul Zeleza's conception of global African diasporas.<sup>12</sup>

Since Hip Hop is an African diasporic phenomenon, KRS' collective consciousness and Pough's belief that Hip Hop is a way of life becomes clearer. I intentionally use the term "phenomenon," instead of just aesthetic or culture to make space for them both (aesthetic and culture), and the worldview that comes out of African diasporas. Africa is the birthplace of humanity.<sup>13</sup> As the birthplace, it is also a wellspring giving life to the elements that eventually coalesce into Hip Hop and flourish around the world. The African drum provide the beats and rhythm of Hip Hop. Dispossession, saltwater slavery, forced and voluntary migration, and being strangers in a foreign land shapes a Hip Hop worldview. Also, the ability to create and sustain life, persist in the midst of oppression, party in the middle of the fire, speak truth to power and envision a new future are the sinews, bones, and joints that make up the culture and Hip Hop as a way of life.

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<sup>11</sup> Lawrence "Kris" Parker (KRS-One), "'40 Years of Hip Hop' - KRS 1 Lecture," *YouTube*, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYEgYnGVOwo>.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic," *African Affairs* 104, no. 414 (2005): 35-68.

<sup>13</sup> Njoki Nathani Wane, "African women and spirituality." In *Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, eds Edmund O'Sullivan, Amish Morrell and Mary Ann O'Connor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 135-150.

## Theoretical and Methodological Approach

I came to this perspective of Hip Hop through Africana Studies, Hip Hop Studies, and my own personal experiences of being raised by a single mother in the hood. I am Hip Hop. My direct confrontation with systemic racism in the hood greatly influences my understanding of how KRS and Pough define Hip Hop. I needed a definition that spoke to my personal struggles of not having a father, attending non-accredited schools, consistently being racially profiled by the police, only seeing negative images of Black men, walking and driving on streets with potholes, living in the midst of run-down buildings and on blocks that the city does not maintain, constantly running from stray dogs so that I would not get a disease, and all of the rest of the effects of systemic racism on the hood. The aesthetics and the cultural depiction of Hip Hop do not fully provide an identity for me based on my life. My place in what KRS describes as a “shared idea,” where I am a part of something bigger than myself, creates a space in Hip Hop that accounts for my personal experience in the hood and that of many others around the world.

My personal experience is part of the larger and multiple African diaspora(s).<sup>14</sup> Potentially the ancestors or the “Spirit” brought my thinking together with the ideas of KRS One, Pough, and several Africana scholars in order to present this idea of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon entailing a collective consciousness. In African American studies scholar Nathaniel Norment’s description of African-centered psychology, he states:

Relying on the principles of harmony within the universe as a natural order of existence, African-centered/Black psychology recognizes the Spirit that permeates everything that is; the notion that everything in the universe is interconnected; the value that the collective is the most salient of existence; and the idea that communal self-knowledge is the key to mental health.<sup>15</sup>

Norment’s explanation of African-centered psychology provides a mode of thinking that elevates the importance of interconnectedness in the universe. If we recognize and value the interconnectedness within the universe, then we can make sense of collective consciousness. The individual self does not exist in and of itself but “as a component of collectivity.”<sup>16</sup> Wade Nobles identifies this as collective consciousness and posits that whatever happens to the individuals affects the community and vice versa.<sup>17</sup> Cedric Robinson contends that the Black radical tradition must consist of “a collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation” in order “to preserve

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<sup>14</sup> Later in this essay, I explain Zeleza’s notion of diasporas.

<sup>15</sup> Nathaniel Norment, Jr., *African American Studies: The Discipline and Its Dimensions* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang US, 2016), 253.

<sup>16</sup> Norment, *African American Studies*, 257.

<sup>17</sup> Norment, *African American Studies*, 257.

the collective being.”<sup>18</sup> In this essay, after explaining the first two waves of global Hip Hop Studies, I propose a third wave that views Hip Hop via this interconnected lens.

My methodological approach to studying Hip Hop (Studies) and global Hip Hop (Studies) entails working with local Hip Hoppas in my community, Streetz and Pres, and reading every single article and book that I can find that examines Hip Hop beyond just in America (see bibliography). Streetz is more than a rapper; he records, directs, edits, and publishes music videos, produces, mix and masters music, and has his own video log. I have built a close relationship with Streetz and observed his daily life. Moreover, I have been behind the scenes of music videos and witnessed him shoot videos; I have spent time with him while he writes songs; I have seen him edit music videos and have interviewed him for his video logs. Pres graduated from the College of William & Mary and I have mainly spent time with him discussing African diasporic scholarship and mentoring him. Pres produces music, raps, and is a former member of the Student Hip-Hop Organization (SHHO) at the College. Pres is also a part of the local Hip Hop scene in Richmond, Virginia. My in-depth relationship with these two Hip Hoppas reveals a thorough portrayal of Hip Hop.

In reviewing the literature of global Hip Hop Studies, I went through several stages based on my own understanding of the subfield. I started, similar to those who have not studied global Hip Hop Studies, by searching for international Hip Hop. My initial thought was that international Hip Hop was Hip Hop outside of the United States. As my research progressed, I realized that Hip Hop has always been “international.” This shift in perspective changed my research approach and what I considered “international Hip Hop.” Since Hip Hop has always been international, then the secondary sources have analyzed Hip Hop in America without American limitations. For example, David Toop’s *The Rap Attack: African Jive to New York Hip Hop* (1984) brings African roots into the discussion.

The scholarship on global Hip Hop Studies is quite expansive. As a result, it is written in several languages, published by companies and maintained by academic institutions around the world. I have included in the bibliography every work that I could find, but I am certain that I did not find everything. The one problem that I had faced involves access to these scholarly works. In addition to university libraries not having every subscription, I could not obtain access to institutions throughout the world. I highlight this situation not only to explain why I could not read everything, but to show how scholars worldwide do not have access. To combat this problem, I am providing this literature review and an extensive bibliography.

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<sup>18</sup> Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 171.

## Scholarship on Global Hip Hop Studies

I, with some contributions from several scholars, have developed a bibliography of global Hip Hop studies.<sup>19</sup> I have developed this list from the perspective of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon. Therefore, I have included all works that view Hip Hop from this perspective, even if it focuses on Hip Hop in the United States. The bibliography also includes works on non-African Americans in America such as Latinx and Chican@s because they bring forth those who had contributed to Hip Hop's manifestation in America but are left out of the narrative. Also, South Asian Americans elucidate the experiences of those who are living in a diaspora. My reasoning for providing this discourse is because I could not find a systematic study that charted out the subfield of global Hip Hop Studies. As such, instead of alphabetical order in the way most bibliographies are listed, I have placed them in chronological order to go along with the development of the subfield.

My research approach to finding these scholarly works include the traditional searches at the College of William and Mary's library, SWEM, online catalog searches and checking for books in the section next to the books I found in the catalogue. Since SWEM library (like most libraries) does not have access to every subscription, I also searched on Google Scholar. After I found a number of sources through SWEM and Google Scholar, I then checked the bibliographies and citations of those sources, which led to another set of sources. I have discovered that cross-referencing is the best way to find scholarly works outside of the United States that are not accessible through library resources and Google Scholar. I have also received assistance from a network of Hip Hop scholars around the world who have shared their own work and pieces that are important to their particular location. Lastly, John Gray has done Hip Hop Studies a tremendous service through his reference book *Hip-Hop Studies: An International Bibliography and Resource Guide* (2016).

In this massive text, the seventh volume in the Black Music Reference Series, Gray documents "scholarly works—monographs, these and journal articles—and all known book-length works, whether scholarly or popular—written by academics, journalists, artist-performers, and others."<sup>20</sup> He provides a bibliography of general Hip Hop Studies, topical studies, biographical works, and a list divided by region. Gray's bibliography, just like the one I have developed, is not all inclusive. He describes that he only includes sources that he can verify, and unlike this bibliography, he includes audiovisual materials, magazine, and newspaper articles. This special issue recommends that libraries purchase *Hip-Hop Studies* for scholars to use alongside the bibliography provided in the issue. However, the *Journal of Hip Hop Studies* recognizes that some scholars will not have access to Gray's bibliography, therefore, this special issue is providing a bibliography. I did not include every text that he provides due to the availability of his text and there are

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<sup>19</sup> For details on the scholars, see the Acknowledgments.

<sup>20</sup> John Gray, *Hip-Hop Studies: An International Bibliography and Resource Guide* (Nyack, NY: African Diaspora Press, 2016).



sources in my bibliography that are not included in *Hip-Hop Studies*. Additionally, *Hip-Hop Studies* stops at 2016 and the bibliography in this special issue stops at 2019.

I posit that there are the three waves of global Hip Hop studies. The first wave started with Toop's *The Rap Attack* (1984) and is marked by an examination of Hip Hop studies but without any defined subfield. I will also refer to this first wave as early global Hip Hop studies. The second wave starts with Tony Mitchell's edited volume *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA* (2001). Although Mitchell does not provide a specific category of global Hip Hop studies, plenty of subsequent scholars point to this book as starting the subfield of global Hip Hop studies. I am arguing for this special issue to start the third wave of global Hip Hop studies. My aim is that scholars inside and outside of America will respond to this special issue and we will ultimately end global Hip Hop studies by identifying global Hip Hop studies as Hip Hop studies. For each wave, I will not discuss every piece published during that time, rather I will discuss the main themes, theories, methods and works that move the field forward.

### **First Wave 1984 - 2000: Early Global Hip Hop Studies Before the Subfield**

Tony Mitchell wrongly states the following in the introduction of *Global Noise* (2001):

This book documents and analyzes for the first time some of the other roots hip-hop has developed outside the USA, filling a vacuum in academic writing on the subject, in which the expression of local identities globally through the vernaculars of rap and hip-hop in foreign contexts has rarely been acknowledged.<sup>21</sup>

Contrary to Mitchell's assessment, the bibliography in this special issue reveals that there are over one hundred scholarly works (books, book chapters and articles) on Hip Hop outside of America before 2000. This does not include the scholarly works that are focused on Hip Hop in America but recognize it as an African diasporic phenomenon, nor the works I have been unable to find. This massive amount of literature illustrates the volume of academic work that has been done on Hip Hop outside of the United States.

Scholars of early global Hip Hop studies deserve credit, because some of them were writing without the clearly defined parameters of a field of Hip Hop studies; all those works before 1994 did not have a text as strong as Rose's *Black Noise*, and many were writing about Hip Hop in their respective region for the first time. In addition to the early pieces sparking the conversations, this is also the time when the first Hip Hop scholars began presenting at conferences and teaching classes. In comparison, second wave global Hip Hop studies have seen the creation of minors in Hip Hop studies, the

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<sup>21</sup> Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 2.

development of Hip Hop archives at several colleges, numerous conferences where Hip Hop can be discussed and a thriving Hip Hop educational community where scholars can talk to each other about their research.

### *First Wave Methodology*

The only common characteristic across the first wave is the methodology for studying Hip Hop. Rose's approach is representative of many scholars of the first wave:

I have listened attentively to a large majority of rap albums available, transcribed over five dozen songs, taped and viewed hundreds of rap music videos, researched rap samples, attended over thirty rap concerts and conferences, and carefully followed the coverage of rap music in popular music magazines, newspapers, and scholarly publications.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to a thorough analysis, many of the scholars conducted ethnographies that involved interviews, participant observation, living in a particular area for a specified amount of time, taking notes, and building relationships with those in that specific community.

### *First Wave Fields of Study and Theoretical Approaches*

Another important component to understanding the first wave is the spread of and access to scholarly works. This greatly shapes the scholarship of early global Hip Hop studies. Scholars from several continents, who speak different languages, live in different cultures, attend a variety of colleges and universities, where they receive differing educational training, from numerous fields of study and learn about various theories study Hip Hop in and outside of their regions. Granted that a clearly defined field had not actualized, scholars write from several fields such as Black Studies, Youth Studies, Popular Music studies, Cultural Studies, Sociology, Dance Studies and Musicology. Some of the main theorists who are utilized include Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, Paul Gilroy, Arjun Appadurai and Antonio Gramsci. I offer this set of theorists because early global Hip Hop scholars of popular music and cultural studies such as Tony Mitchell, Sanjay Sharma, Sunaina Maira and Andy Bennett use these theorists.

The theoretical approaches in the first wave best illustrate the plethora of ways scholars initially had studied global Hip Hop (and Hip Hop for that matter). For example, Louis Chude-Sokei, a Black literary scholar living in America, uses Countee Cullen to theorize about Africa; French theorist Chantal de Gournay uses Gilles Deleuze in her description of material objects, Hip Hop, movement and technology; Brazilian scholar Maria Aparecida da Silva utilizes Sueli Carneiro for feminist theory; and Jamaican literary scholar Carolyn Cooper uses Kamau Brathwaite's concept "bridges of sound" to

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<sup>22</sup> Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), xiv.

describe the “creative potential” of Africans throughout the diasporas.<sup>23</sup> Also, since many of the scholars are journalists or are simply providing an account of the movement, they either do not implement a particular theory or do not share their theoretical approach in the text.

### *First Wave Subjects*

In charting out the subjects of the first wave, the most discussed is the development and presence of Hip Hop within a particular region. I have counted more than sixty books, book chapters and journal articles of the approximately one hundred fifty works that I can find that discuss global Hip Hop. One interesting point is that Hip Hop scholars outside of the United States provide some of the earliest scholarship on Hip Hop studies. British scholars Iain Chambers and Simon Frith publish in 1985 and 1986, respectively, French scholar André Prévos and New Zealand scholar Tania Kopytko both publish in 1986. One of the first full-length texts on Hip Hop in French, *Yo! Révolution Rap – L’histoire – Les Groupes – Le Mouvement* (1991), is published by French writer David Dufresne. This look at Hip Hop outside of the United States points to several themes that can be used to summarize early global Hip Hop studies.

The most salient argument that marks the more than sixty regionally focused pieces is the importance of the local within the global Hip Hop culture. Sociologist Roland Robertson’s seminal work, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity Heterogeneity,” provides a detailed explanation about “glocalization” and “glocal” in which, after 1995, global Hip Hop studies scholars regularly use.<sup>24</sup> Robertson argues against the polarity of local agency opposite of global trends. Instead, he believes, globalization, which is a business term that originated with the Japanese, provides a better explanation of social processes. He defines glocalization: “The compression of the world - has involved and increasingly involves the creation and the incorporation of locality, processes which themselves largely shape, in turn, the compression of the world as a whole.”<sup>25</sup> First wave global Hip Hop studies scholars utilize this perspective contending against cultural imperialism, which becomes cultural globalization, where, essentially global popular cultures dominate smaller nations.<sup>26</sup> Instead of local regions

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<sup>23</sup> Carolyn Cooper, “Ragamuffin Sounds Crossing Over from Reggae to Rap and Back,” *Caribbean Quarterly*, 44 no. 1/2 (1998): 153.

<sup>24</sup> Robertson does not focus on Hip Hop in his scholarship and while he is the first to apply the term glocal to social theory, he is not the first to theorize about the relationship between the local and the global. Louis Chude-Sokei in “Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa,” states: “Community is narrated there in that very tense space between the local and the global: the space they call ‘the borderline’.” *African Arts* 27, No. 4. (1994): 81.

<sup>25</sup> Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities* eds Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), 13.

<sup>26</sup> Tony Mitchell discusses the scholarly trajectory of cultural imperialism and cultural globalization in *Popular Music* (1996), pg. 50. Early global Hip Hop studies scholars do not necessarily cite Roberson’s notion of glocalization or respond to the “cultural imperialism,” argument but they do all contend that specific areas create a distinct form of Hip Hop.

mimetically creating an Americanized Hip Hop, they develop their own localized version, each with its distinct identity.

The next closest subjects are more than fifteen works that detail Hip Hop's African nature (roots, diasporic network and Afrocentricity) and eleven or more general books about Hip Hop. Surprisingly, there are at least eleven works solely focused on graffiti whereas there are only a few on breakdancing and deejaying. Globalization and Hip Hop within popular culture are other subjects that scholars of the first wave cover to a lesser extent. Then, there are works here and there that consider education, feminism, technology, and language.<sup>27</sup> In the one essay that provides a feminist lens, "O Rap Das Meninas," Maria da Silva examines three Black women rappers who share their understanding of feminism and how it is a part of their music. Da Silva's article is important because it brings to light how a feminist focus raises a different theoretical framework and set of questions to understanding Hip Hop globally.

The diversity of scholars, fields of studies and subjects also point to the fact that they did not converse with each other and build on previous works. Therefore, in my presentation of the scholarship of the first wave, I place the scholars in conversation with each other. Although the regional focus takes up the most amount of attention in the early literature, I start with the African nature of Hip Hop. I then move from the atmosphere in New York to Hip Hop's spread around the world during the first wave. From what scholars have defined as African roots, I move on to the locations around the world Hip Hop manifested, and then highlight some of the scholarly areas that receive little attention.

### *Hip Hop's African and Diasporic Nature*

The book that commences global Hip Hop studies is David Toop's *The Rap Attack: African Jive to New York Hip Hop* (1984).<sup>28</sup> The premise of *Rap Attack* is that Hip Hop, by way of the dozens and signifying, has "clear roots in West Africa."<sup>29</sup> William Perkins in *Droppin' Science* states: "Without doubt the African elements are part of rap's foundation."<sup>30</sup> The positioning of Hip Hop as having African roots starts its history not in the Bronx, but with Africa. In *Nation Conscious Rap* (1991), Joseph Eure and James

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<sup>27</sup> Elaine Nunes de Andrade, "A Mobilização Juvenil Hip Hop: Desenvolvendo Um Recurso Alternativo de Educação" *Anais do 2º Simpósio de Pesquisa da FEUSP* (São Paulo: FEUSP, 1995), 225 - 237, John Fenn, and Alex Perullo, "Language Choice and Hip Hop in Tanzania and Malawi," *Popular Music & Society* 24, no. 3 (2000): 73-93, Elaine Richardson and Sean Lewis, "'Flippin' the Script'/'Blowin' up the Spot': Puttin' Hip-Hop Online in (African) America and South Africa," in *Global Literacies and the World-Wide Web*, 2000, 251-276.

<sup>28</sup> I may be wrong about this because it is possible that in a library in another part of the world, they may have a source about Hip Hop. Also, although I could not find any mention of African influences in the scholarly works before *The Rap Attack* does not mean that it does not exist.

<sup>29</sup> David Toop, *The Rap Attack: African Jive to New York Hip Hop* (London: Pluto Press), 31.

<sup>30</sup> William Perkins, *Droppin Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 2.

Spady's Hiphopography provide the interviews with Doug E. Fresh and Professor X. Doug E. says that "I'm going to do this beat box thing... And when I went to Africa some of the brothers over there told me that they think it's African, tribal."<sup>31</sup> Professor X breaks it down this way: "Because, via the drum it connects our African genes whether we are conscious of our connections or not." This connection to Africa is bolstered by the arguments of Jeffrey Decker "The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip Hop Nationalism" (1993), Louis Chude-Sokei in "Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa" (1994), R. J. Stephens in "Keepin' it Real: Towards an Afrocentric Aesthetic Analysis of Rap Music and Hip-Hop Subculture" (1996) and numerous other scholars. In addition to the historical fact that the transatlantic slave trade involuntary created diasporas in what becomes the Americas,<sup>32</sup> Chude-Sokei explains that "Africa constantly changes, but the meanings of Africa change too; they change and are adapted to fit the local notions of black identity and cultural survival."<sup>33</sup>

The forced migration of Africans across the Atlantic - dispossession, created the diasporas from which people, ways of living, cultures and aesthetics come from and eventually merges together in New York in the later 1960s. George Lipsitz, in *Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place*, posits that Hip Hoppas in New York have a "global consciousness."<sup>34</sup> This global consciousness comes from "a politics of diasporic affinity and articulation" that had been "part and parcel of the phenomenon's early development via the cultural exchange between African American, Puerto Rican, and West Indian youth in mid-1970s New York City."<sup>35</sup> Juan Flores has ardently argued that Latinos should not be left out of the narrative and highlight that African-descended people lived in New York.<sup>36</sup> He describes how Blacks and Puerto Ricans all grow up together and had lived in community with one another since "the early 1900s."<sup>37</sup> Spady and Eure shares that "the Bronx is a vast cityscape of multiple realities."<sup>38</sup> The combination of all these scholars illustrate a vibrant diasporic community in the Bronx composed of Africans from Jamaica and Barbados, living alongside Puerto Ricans, and African Americans, with the distinct flavors of each culture mixing together to create an atmosphere ripe for the emergence of something new.

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<sup>31</sup> Joseph Eure and James Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap: The Hip Hop Vision* (New York: PC International Press, 1991), 2.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Gilroy and Louis Chude-Sokei contends that Europe must be included in the conversation of identifying Hip Hop based on Europeans' enslavement of Africans.

<sup>33</sup> Chude-Sokei, "Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa," 80.

<sup>34</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (New York: Verso, 1994).

<sup>35</sup> Marc D. Perry, "Global Black Self-Fashionings: Hip Hop as Diasporic Space." *Identities* 15, no. 6 (2008): 638. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890802470660>.

<sup>36</sup> Juan Flores, "'Que Assimilated, Brother, Yo Soy Asimilao': The Structuring of Puerto Rican Identity in the US," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13 no. 3 (1985): 1-16.

<sup>37</sup> Juan Flores, "Rappin, Writtin, and Breakin," *Dissent*. 34 no. 4 (1986): 580.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph D. Eure and James G Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap: The Hip Hop Vision*, (New York: PC International Press, 1991) xi.



Two key elements of Hip Hop's manifestation in New York continue as Hip Hop spread around the world, communal identity and resistance. Lipsitz contends that Hip Hop's energy comes from responding to the realities of the African diaspora.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, it is precisely their diasporic identity that plays an integral role in the development and establishment of Hip Hop. While there is not one unanimous worldview that every Hip Hoppa held to and holds to, the culture ties Hip Hop together. Early global Hip Hop scholars present two ways in which Hip Hop responds to systemic injustice: Black nationalism and Afrocentrism.<sup>40</sup> Toop and Decker describe both while Decker goes into detail. Decker posits "sixties-inspired hip hop nationalism" focuses on time while Afrocentrism focuses more on place. This is how Decker defines the two:

Sixties-inspired hip hop, espoused by rap groups such as Public Enemy, is time conscious to the degree that it appropriates the language of organized black revolts from the 1960s around the concept of 'nation time.' Afrocentric rap, which can be found in the music of X-Clan, reclaims the ancient Egyptian empire as the African origin in order to generate racial pride and awareness in the struggle over injustice in America.<sup>41</sup>

In forging this communal identity and resisting White Supremacy, early Hip Hoppas create the Hip Hop nation. The Hip Hop nation segues into the spread of Hip Hop outside of the United States as people around the world join the nation.

### *Imitation and Indigenization*

Hip Hop enters countries through rap music on radios, tours, movies, and pioneers traveling to different countries. Iain Chambers in *Urban Rhythms* (1985) explains how the British had heard "Rapper's Delight," "The Breaks," and "The Message."<sup>42</sup> Alain Bellet in "Les Rats des Villes Peinturlurent le Silence," reveals how television shows, as early as 1983, show Hip Hop and talk about the Zulu nation excursion throughout Europe.<sup>43</sup> Andre Prévos and Juan Flores account for the tours that rappers, breakers, and

<sup>39</sup> George Lipsitz, *Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place* (New York: Verso, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> David Toop, *Rap Attack 2: African Rap to Global Hip Hop*. Rev., Expanded and Updated ed. (London: Serpent's Tail, 1991); Alejandro Frigerio, "Artes Negras: Una Perspectiva Afro-Céntrica," *Estudios Afro-Asiáticos* 23 (1992): 175-190; Jeffrey Louis Decker, "The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip Hop Nationalism," *Social Text*, no. 34 (1993): 53-84; Clarence Lusane, "Rap, Race and Politics," *Race & Class* 35, no. 1 (1993): 41-56; Errol A. Henderson, "Black Nationalism and Rap Music," *Journal of Black Studies* 26, no. 3 (1996): 308-39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2784825>.

<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey Louis Decker, "The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip Hop Nationalism," *Social Text*, no. 34 (1993): 54.

<sup>42</sup> Chambers does not explain how they listen to Hip Hop, but several other scholars bring up the radio as a tool to disseminate rap music around the world: France (David Dufresne, *Yo! Révolution Rap*, 1991 and François Bensignor, "Le Rap Français vers L'âge Adulte," 1994) and Holland (David Toop, *Rap Attack 2*, 1991).

<sup>43</sup> Several scholars describe the Zulu's visit to France in particular but do not agree on the date, ranges from 1982 - 1984. Georges Lapassade, "Qu'est-Ce Que Le Hip-Hop?" *Hommes et Migrations* 1147, no. 1 (1991): 31-34, Françoise Robert l'Argenton "Graffiti: tags et grafs." *Communication et langages* 85, no.

graffiti artists go on to such locations as the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Latin America.<sup>44</sup> Eure and Spade's *Hiphopography* elucidate that several of the Afrocentric rappers traveled to Africa.<sup>45</sup> Günther Jacob in *Agit-Pop* and Dietmar Elflein in "From Krauts with Attitudes to Turks with Attitudes: Some Aspects of Hip-Hop History in Germany," both point to the movie *Wild Style* as the introduction of Hip Hop into Germany. Furthermore, due to the plethora of locales Hip Hop reaches and the variety of receptions, the growth, timetable, phases, and indigenization process all differ.<sup>46</sup>

Scholars researching Hip Hop in a specific region also agree that when Hip Hop first arrives, the receiving community imitates Hip Hop by copying the dances, rapping in English, having a "sense of imagined cultural affinity with African Americans," playing rap music made in America at Hip Hop parties and just generally copying African American Hip Hop style.<sup>47</sup> After this imitation phase, Hip Hop indigenizes in that local area. In addition to the conditions of the local context, the particular community that forms the Hip Hop culture determines how Hip Hop takes on its unique character in that particular locale. Flores argues that Hip Hop expands because of its afro diasporic identity: "Precisely because of its grounding in Black and Puerto Rican street culture, hip-hop harbors a radical universal appeal."<sup>48</sup> What he is getting at is the way in which the very fabric of Hip Hop's identity entails multiple communities coming together. He points to how those outside of New York are drawn to Hip Hop's character of cultivating a communal identity and providing multiple ways of resistance.

After indigenization, based on the group, scholars will follow a particular pattern. If they are analyzing White teens or young adults, then they will discuss appropriation and/or authenticity. If the scholar examines immigrant communities then they will talk about their political identity in that community or how they respond to oppression. Those scholars that research Africans throughout the diasporas talk about the Hip Hop nation,

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1 (1990): 59-71 and François Bensignor, "Le Rap Français vers L'âge Adulte." *Hommes et Migrations* 1175, no. 1 (1994): 52-56.

<sup>44</sup> André Prévos, "CB'ers and Cibistes: The Development and Impact of CB Radio in France," *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 19 (1986): 145-154. doi:10.1111/j.0022-3840.1986.1904\_145.x, Juan Flores, "Rap Latino Sabor," in *Droppin' Science* ed. William Perkins (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

<sup>45</sup> Joseph D. Eure and James G Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap: The Hip Hop Vision*, (New York: PC International Press, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> What I am getting at is how in one place, breakdancing could be more prevalent at first, while graffiti could be more popular in another.

<sup>47</sup> There are too many to list, so here are some examples: Andy Bennett, "Hip Hop am Main: The Localization of Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture," *Media, Culture & Society* 21, (1999): 77-91; John Fenn and Alex Perullo, "Language Choice and Hip Hop in Tanzania and Malawi," *Popular Music & Society* 24, no. 3 (2000): 73-93; Lisbet Torp, "Hip Hop Dances: Their Adoption and Function among Boys in Denmark from 1983-84," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 18 (1986): 29-36; André JM. Prévos, "The Evolution of French Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture in the 1980s and 1990," *French Review*, 1996, 713-25; Heinz Ickstadt, "Appropriating Difference: Turkish-German Rap," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 44, no. 4 (1999): 571-78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41157976>.

<sup>48</sup> Juan Flores, "Rappin, Writin, and Breakin," 584.



and/or how Hip Hoppas continue with Black nationalism or Afrocentrism. They do not specifically cite the aforementioned scholarly pieces, rather they discuss how they are Black nationalist or Afrocentric.

### *Estranhamento*

In almost every piece on a specific region, the scholar either mentions or describes how Hip Hop brings together a group experiencing some form of “*estranhamento*.”<sup>49</sup> Marília Pontes Sposito posits that *estranhamento* creates idleness and indeterminacy about the future. She explicates that *estranhamento*:

(Q)uer sejam elas derivadas da situação de classe ou das determinações geracionais, não podem ser reduzidas apenas às suas expressões econômicas mas, pelo contrário, devem ser compreendidas no âmbito de um momento de abertura, de indeterminação e de ausência de poder que assume feições diversas, no plano sócio-cultural.<sup>50</sup>

The exclusionary dimensions cannot be reduced only to their economic expressions, but, on the contrary, they must be understood in the context of socio-cultural aspects of lacking purpose, indeterminacy and being without power.<sup>51</sup>

This estrangement includes several groups: youth, immigrants, those living in decolonized regions and Africans living throughout the diasporas.<sup>52</sup> In response, to their outcaste status, they come together and create a Hip Hop identity that directly relates to their specific socio-cultural context and the global Hip Hop culture. Dietmar Elflein’s account of Da Crime Posse provides the perfect example. Elflein explains that they consist of two Turks, a German and one Cuban who all identify as “Turkish.”<sup>53</sup> He makes clear that this “‘Turkish’ identity” is “a mythological one, standing as *pars pro toto* for the identity of all immigrants or foreigners.”<sup>54</sup>

### *African Diasporic Networks*

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<sup>49</sup> Portuguese for estrangement. Marília Pontes Sposito, “A Sociabilidade Juvenil e a Rua: Novos Conflitos E Ação Coletiva Na Cidade,” *Tempo Social* 5 (1993): 161-178.

<sup>50</sup> Marília Pontes Sposito, “A Sociabilidade Juvenil e a Rua: Novos Conflitos e Ação Coletiva na Cidade,” *Tempo Social* 5 no. 1-2, (1993) 164.

<sup>51</sup> Author’s translation.

<sup>52</sup> Georges Lapassade, *Ethnosociology: Anglo-Saxon sources* (Paris: Méridiens-Klincksieck, 1991), Lara Santos Amorim, “Cenas de Uma Revolta Urbana: Movimento Hip Hop na Periferia de Brasília,” *Revista Brasileira de Pós-Graduação em Ciências Sociais* (1997), Kurt Iveson, “Partying, Politics and Getting Paid: Hip Hop and National Identity in Australia,” *Overland*, no. 147, 1997 and Chris Warne, “Articulating Identity from the Margins: ‘Le MouV’ and the Rise of Hiphop and Ragga in France,” in *Voices of France: Social, Political and Cultural Identity* (1997).

<sup>53</sup> Dietmar Elflein, “From Krauts with Attitudes to Turks with Attitudes: Some Aspects of Hip-Hop History in Germany,” *Popular Music* 17 no. 3 (1998): 255–65.

<sup>54</sup> Elflein, “From Krauts with Attitudes to Turks with Attitudes.”

Shoshanna Lurie's article, "Funk and Hip-Hop Transculture: Cultural Conciliation and Racial Identification in the 'Divided City'," (2000)<sup>55</sup> illustrates how Hip Hop in Brazil brings together dispossessed Blacks in the midst of and in resistance to systemic injustice resulting from "post-colonial domination and exploitation" in Brazil. Lurie also elucidates the ways in which globalization<sup>56</sup> can be beneficial to the Hip Hop community by allowing them to connect globally. Additionally, she presents the notion "aesthetics of dispossession," which gets at the "political, militant, and racially identified" rap while showing how Brazilian rappers connect with the freedom struggles of the 1960s.<sup>57</sup> While Blacks in Brazil relate to the sixty's freedom struggle, Louis Chude-Sokei provides an excellent example of how diasporic networks functions:

The legendary team of Steely and Cleevie in Jamaica, or maybe Bobby Digital in Kingston, may send a floppy disc with the basic rhythm track to Daddy Freddy, who is in London with the up-and-coming production team of Mafia or Fluxy (or maybe Fashion, today's dominant U.K. sound). Within a few days this mix is booming down the fences at the weekly "sound-clash" between Metromedia Hi Fi and the mighty Stone Love Sound System somewhere in a crowded field in West Kingston. Or in a community center in Brixton. An 'authentic' Jamaican product! And this trade goes both ways, circulating throughout diaspora. (Even in Lagos, Nigeria, I have sat listening to Igbo rude-boys and Yoruba dreads rap in Jamaican Patwah about the virtues of Eddy Murphy!).<sup>58</sup>

Sokei's telling story shows the key role of technology, the ways in which globalization support the African diasporic network, and hardcore evidence to the existence of the network. He actually connects back to Cooper's explanation of Kamau Brathwaite "bridges of sound" and presents the literal ways in which diasporic aesthetics crossover the Atlantic.

### *Appropriation and Authenticity*

In focusing on the appropriation of African American popular music, several scholars indicate that there is a long history and relationship with other forms of Black and American popular music and culture. The historical influences of spirituals, blues,

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<sup>55</sup> I am using Lurie's essay to capture the various components of an African diasporic community creating a Hip Hop identity in light of oppression because she is writing near the end of the first wave. She brings in many of the ideas, although she did not cite them, that have been developed throughout the first wave.

<sup>56</sup> Several scholars discuss globalization, Tony Mitchell, "Australian Hip Hop as a 'Glocal' Subculture,"; Deborah Pacini Hernandez and Reebee Garofalo, "Hip Hop in Havana Rap, Race and National Identity in Contemporary Cuba,"; Nina Cornyetz, "Fetishized Blackness: Hip Hop and Racial Desire in Contemporary Japan," and George Lipsitz in *Dangerous Crossroads*. Lipsitz provides a thorough explanation. Starting in the 1970s, "capital, communications and populations travel across the globe," and the need for capital forces decolonized nations to "accept the compulsory austerity measures required by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as the price of securing loans" (29). Consequently, these nations experience both the problems of being formerly colonized and "new conditions in world politics, economics and culture" (29).

<sup>57</sup> Shoshanna Lurie, "Funk and Hip-Hop Transculture: Cultural Conciliation and Racial Identification in the 'Divided City'," 649.

<sup>58</sup> Chude-Sokei, "Post-Nationalist Geographies: Rasta, Ragga, and Reinventing Africa," 82.

gospel, bebop, jazz, salsa, and reggae on Hip Hop in America, also plays an integral role in Hip Hop's reception around the globe. When particular locations encounter Hip Hop for the first time, they have already heard jazz, gospel or reggae. For example, Iain Chambers, Anthony Marks, Carolyn Cooper, Deborah Hernandez, Reebee Garofalo and Andy Bennett provide evidence of this history in England, Italy, France, and Cuba.<sup>59</sup>

The early global Hip Hop Studies scholars who discuss appropriation and authenticity directly link their argument to the discussion on glocalization. In light of globalization, the question they consider is this: Can White Hip Hoppas who appropriate an African American popular culture be authentic or are they appropriating to the point of exploitation. Tony Mitchell first questions the "authenticity" of American made music and states: "The history of popular music is a constant flow of appropriations in which origins, and notions of originality, are often difficult, if not impossible, to trace."<sup>60</sup> As a result, Whites who create a form of Hip Hop in their own space are not "unauthentic or treasonable."<sup>61</sup> Andy Bennett's study of White Hip Hoppas in a predominantly White town in North-East England adds two factors that contribute to authenticity. Authentic White Hip Hoppas go against the "small-minded" racists in Newcastle and do not conform to the conventional social patterns of their community.<sup>62</sup> These real Hip Hoppas have an "intimate understanding of hip hop's 'blackness'," and maintain a level of authenticity of Hip Hop in their community.<sup>63</sup>

I focus on this appropriation and authenticity discourse because this conversation continues into the second wave. I mark United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization dossier, "Focus: Youth's Sonic Forces," as the transition point between the first and second wave. "Focus" traces Hip Hop and electronic dance music due to their influence in popular music. The several short articles by Hip Hop scholars cover a variety of Hip Hop topics, "indigenous rights in New Zealand (32 - 33)," "identity among black youth in Colombia (38 - 39)," post-apartheid South Africa and political debates by Algerian rappers.<sup>64</sup> In addition to the time in which this work is published, I mark it as a transition point because it is a precursor of sorts to Mitchell's edited volume, *Global Noise*. Although briefly, the articles touch upon different locations and aspects of Hip Hop globally.

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<sup>59</sup> Deborah Pacini Hernandez and Reebee Garofalo, "Hip Hop in Havana: Rap, Race and National Identity in Contemporary Cuba," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 11, no. 1 (1999); Steve Wright, "'A Love Born of Hate': Autonomist Rap in Italy," *Theory, Culture & Society* 17, no. 3 (2000); Hadj Miliani, "Banlieues Entre Rap et Raï," *Hommes & Migrations* 1191, no. 1 (1995).

<sup>60</sup> Tony Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop, and Rap in Europe and Oceania* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996): 8.

<sup>61</sup> Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity*, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Andy Bennett, "Rappin' on the Tyne: White Hip Hop Culture in Northeast England—an Ethnographic Study," *The Sociological Review* 47, no. 1 (1999): 1-24.

<sup>63</sup> Bennett, "Rappin' on the Tyne."

<sup>64</sup> The Unesco Courier (53) no. 7, (2000): 21-56.

## Second Wave 2001 - 2018: Start of the Subfield of Global Hip Hop Studies

The second wave commences with Tony Mitchell's edited volume *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside of the USA* (2001) and encompasses the time period of 2001 to 2018. Several historic events and technological advancements shape this period: 9/11 - the terrorist attacks on American soil that shifted how Muslims are viewed, the election of the first Black president in the United States - Barack Obama, several natural disasters - hurricane Katrina, earthquake in Haiti, tsunami in Indian Ocean, wars around the world and civil wars, threat of nuclear weapons such as in North Korea, the killing of Michael Brown, exponential growth of social media - MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and the creation and growth of smartphones. Within this landscape, the recent phase of globalization, that I discussed during the early phase, has been in existence for decades and Hip Hop has transformed and been in existence for more than thirty years. Hip Hop studies has also grown by the time we reach the second wave. Although Forman and Neal's *That's the Joint* (2004) comes out three years after *Global Noise*, there is a vast amount of Hip Hop scholarship up to 2001 and all of the texts after 2004 can reference Forman and Neal. This framework contextualizes the second wave of global Hip Hop studies and describes the content of what global Hip Hop scholars are examining.

The identification of *Global Noise* (2001) as a central text distinguishes the second wave from the first and provides a key feature of the second wave - a clearly defined conversation among scholars on global Hip Hop. Whereas during the first wave, scholars had not communicated with each other, the second wave consists of a coherent conversation. Overall, many of the other features of the first wave continue: scholarship from around the world, a variety of disciplines, using varying theoretical approaches to discuss Hip Hop in their particular region and the Hip Hoppa being recognized as a theorist. Additionally, global Hip Hop scholars of both waves become theorists. They contribute to the ways in which we understand "Hip Hop," and their specific field, such as linguistics or feminism.

The standardization of global Hip Hop studies leads to a massive explosion in scholarship in this subfield. The new components of the second wave entail an increase in the number of books, monographs and edited volumes, areas around the world being covered for the first time, expansion on the work of the first wave in particular regions, and additional fields of study analyzing Hip Hop that had received minuscule or no scholarly attention at all. Whereas the first wave had more than one hundred and fifty works, I have found at least three hundred and fifty scholarly works during the second wave. The themes introduced during the first wave, such as authenticity and globalization, play a major role in the second wave. Likewise, the majority of scholarly works in the second wave are regionally focused with more than one hundred and fifty pieces (same number of the whole first wave) focusing on a specific region. Moreover, the growth leads to a tremendous increase in new subjects, theorists, methodological

approaches, and fields of study engaging with Hip Hop. The two other main features of the second wave consist of important contributions from linguistics and a greater emphasis on “politics.” By politics I am referring to the traditional institutional political systems around the world and power struggles - decolonization, resistance and activism-against the systems of oppression tied to and outside of the sovereignty of the nation-state.<sup>65</sup>

### *Second Wave Fields of Study and Theoretical Approaches*

Some of the new fields of study and subjects are linguistics, religion, technology, business, law, theater, spatiality, gender and sexuality. The new theorists include but are not limited to Nilüfer Göle (religion), Brenda Gottschild (dance), Robin D. G. Kelley, Cheikh Anta Diop, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’O’s, Manning Marable, W.E.B. Du Bois, Edouard Glissant (African American, African and Diasporic), Paulo Freire (education), Roderick Ferguson, Raewyn Connell, Fatima El-Tayeb, Michael Kimmel, Teresa Ebert, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Patricia Hill Collins, Joan Morgan, Judith Baxter, Kumari Silva, (gender and sexuality) Edward Said, Bertolt Brecht, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida, Sara Ahmed, Jürgen Habermas, Douglas Kellner, Michel Foucault, Benjamin Brinner and W.P. Mclean. The increase in the number of theorists and fields is also influenced by new locations being studied for the first time.<sup>66</sup> These regions include but are not limited to Accra, Ghana, Benin, Cameroon, Croatia, Estonia, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Istanbul, Palestine, North Korea, Lapland, Finland, Taipei, Myanmar, São João de Meriti near Rio de Janeiro, Scandinavia, Slovakia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania. While some may question why I have provided this extensive list of fields, theorists and locations, I contend it is important to understanding global Hip Hop studies. If we do not recognize the breadth of scholarship, then we will miss interconnections as well as why certain scholars make particular arguments and who are their audiences. Furthermore, as I will explain in the third wave, my aim is to make Hip Hop studies truly global.

### *Second Wave Methodological Additions*

The second wave introduced two methodological approaches: Hiphopography and the usage of technology. James Spady had first introduced Hiphopography in *Nation*

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<sup>65</sup> There are numerous arguments about politics outside of the institutional political system or politics of the everyday; Robin D.G. Kelley’s well known “infrapolitics” in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class* (1994) and Michael Hanchard’s “Contours of Black Political Thought: An Introduction and Perspective,” *Political Theory* (2010).

<sup>66</sup> I am not referring to scholars who mention that Hip Hop is found in a certain space, rather a full study about Hip Hop’s localization and growth in a specific region. Also, while I usually argue against scholars making claims about writing about something for the first time, there claims in this instance is plausible for several reasons. Hip Hop has only reached some places within the last thirty to twenty years. In addition to it being a rather new culture, as late as 2008, Tricia Rose had to write a book arguing for Hip Hop studies legitimacy in *Hip Hop Wars*. The combination of Hip Hop being relatively new and its lack of acceptance throughout the academy contributes to some just now writing about it within the 21st century.



*Conscious Rap* (1991). He uses this same methodology in *Tha Global Cipa* (2006) and details several scholarly works that have discussed it in “Mapping and Re-Membering Hip Hop History, Hiphopography and African Diasporic History” (2013). Spady’s goal of a Hiphopography is to ensure that “these historical actors’ experiences and visions enter the historical record in their own voices.”<sup>67</sup> Therefore, a Hiphopography utilizes techniques that aids in creating a post-colonial text and reflects.”<sup>68</sup> Based on his review of the works that describe Hiphopography, the components of a Hiphopography entail ethnography, in depth interviews based on conversations where the involved parties are “mutually present,” recognition of the Hip Hoppa’s self-expression, comprehension of how Hip Hoppa’s “understand who they are, how they became who they are, and what they make of the process of becoming who they are,” and an “identification of the complex tropes, mythologies, subtle paralinguistic gestures, imaginings, and narrative strategies that are deployed to frame who they have been or will be.”<sup>69</sup> Technologically, scholars now examine social media websites, virtual communities and digital courses created by teachers in the education field.<sup>70</sup>

### *Why Global Noise*

Scholars refer to *Global Noise* (2001) for two reasons: Mitchell provides a collection of essays in one book about Hip Hop around the world and argues for the glocalization of Hip Hop, as explained by Robertson. In many ways, Mitchell’s argument has been forecasted by the first wave and he just so happened to bring the arguments and text together into one book. The primary statement of the text that many scholars refer to is: “Hip-hop and rap cannot be viewed simply as an expression of African American culture; it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world.”<sup>71</sup> Throughout the first wave, Hip Hop scholars had discussed African American popular culture, glocality, appropriation, cultural imperialism, authenticity and identity. In the second wave, whereas scholars are responding to the first wave and Mitchell, the additional fields of study make the conversation more robust. There is a

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<sup>67</sup> James Spady, “Mapping and Re-Membering Hip Hop History, Hiphopography and African Diasporic History,” *Western Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 2 (2013): 126.

<sup>68</sup> Spady, “Mapping and Re-Membering Hip Hop History, Hiphopography and African Diasporic History,” 126.

<sup>69</sup> Spady, “Mapping and Re-Membering Hip Hop History, Hiphopography and African Diasporic History,” 126.

<sup>70</sup> Adriana Helbig, *Hip Hop Ukraine: Music, Race, and African Migration* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014); C. Moreno-Almeida, “Reporting on Selective Voices of Resistance: Secularism, Class and Islamist Rap,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2017: 1-17; Yasser Mattar, “Virtual Communities and Hip-Hop Music Consumers in Singapore: Interplaying Global, Local and Subcultural identities,” *Leisure Studies*, no. 22 (2003) 283-300; Akesha Horton, Keith Heggart, “Engaging the Community through a Creative Curriculum: A Hip-Hop Case Study,” *Australian Educational Leader* 37, no. 3, Sep 2015: 66-69.

<sup>71</sup> Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001) 1.



clearer delineation between African diasporic identity, “Blackness,” and Latinidad in response to the position of Mitchell and some of the first wave.

### *Regional Studies*

The primary feature of the second wave is a focus on scholarly works on a specific region, which entails an examination of locations for the first time, building on the work of the first wave in those specific locales, and bringing in new topics, theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to these small cities, states, or countries. The first wave had provided extensive scholarship on France and, to a lesser extent, Australia. Now there is a historiography of works on numerous countries throughout Europe (Sina Nitzsche, Walter Grunzweig *Hip-Hop in Europe: Cultural Identities and Transnational Flows*, 2013), a heavy emphasis on the continent of Africa along with works specific to East Africa, West Africa, South Africa and several cities and countries throughout Africa (Mwenda Ntarangwi, *East African Hip Hop*, 2003; Halifu Osumare, *The Hiplife in Ghana: The West African Indigenization of Hip-Hop*, 2012; Msia Kibona Clark, *Hip-hop in Africa*, 2018) and a number of works on Cuba and Brazil (Marc Perry, *Negro Soy Yo*, 2016 and Derek Pardue, *Ideologies of Marginality in Brazilian Hip Hop*, 2008).<sup>72</sup>

Some examples of new conversations that the second wave contributes are Ian Maxwell, *Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes: Hip Hop Down Under Comin’ Upper* (2003) which responds to the literature on Hip Hop in Australia and Paul Silverstein’s “Why are we waiting to start the fire?: French Gangsta Rap and the Critique of State Capitalism” (2005). Silverstein’s chapter, in *Black, Blanc, Beur: Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture in the Francophone World* (2005) provides the perfect example of regionally focused scholarship in the second wave. He responds to the literature on French Hip Hop from the first wave (Cachin 1996, Dufresne 1999, and Lappasasde 1990), utilizes theorists such as Gilroy, Arjun Appadurai and Dick Hebdige and focuses on gangsta rappers that come out of banlieues and cités. Silverstein is able to provide a thorough examination of globalization and neoliberalism in France after 2001 involving “the gradual dismantling of the public sector” to the point where “today (2004 or 2005) cities have been marked by significant physical dilapidation and the flight of local commerce, creating an atmosphere of depressed sterility and an experience of social exile.” Within this context, Silverstein discusses the complexities of the relationship between French rappers and globalization: while they endure oppressive conditions, they also have the opportunity to profit.

### *Appropriation and Authenticity, Again*

Alongside the conversation on Hip Hop in specific areas, global Hip Hop studies provide a significant amount of attention to appropriation, authenticity, and identity

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<sup>72</sup> I am providing this list to highlight the location that received the most scholarly attention. I only provide a few texts as examples granted that the bibliography captures every scholarly work I can find. If you are interested in a specific locale, in addition to this bibliography, I recommend looking at the *Hip-Hop Studies* (2016) reference guide. He provides a bibliography based on regions.

during the second wave. This conversation expands the notion of glocalization, focuses on immigration, and goes into greater detail into “Blackness,” diasporic identity, and Latinidad. One of the earliest and most cited works is Halifu Osumare’s “Beat Streets in the Global Hood: Connective Marginalities of the Hip Hop Globe,” (2001) where she introduces the idea of “connective marginalities.” Osumare positions African American popular culture at the center of global youth culture. She posits that Hip Hop entails “connective marginalities ... social resonances between black expressive culture within its contextual political history and similar dynamics in other nations.”<sup>73</sup> In the midst of technological growth, which contributes to the expansion of Black popular culture, people with similar “culture itself (Jamaica and Cuba), class (North African Arabs in France), historical oppression (Native Hawaiians in Hawaii), or simply the discursive construction of ‘youth’ as a peripheral social status (Japan)” connect to Black’s “historical marginalized status.”<sup>74</sup> This connection to Hip Hop, that Osumare presents, reveals how those around the world develop an “authentic” Hip Hop in their locale. Authenticity in this case involves identifying culture as intertext and the ways in which Hip Hoppas around the world shape their own Hip Hop culture based on this international conceptualization of Black identity.

Yvonne Bynoe, in “Getting Real about Global Hip Hop,” adds another layer to this globalized understanding of Blackness mediated through Hip Hop that shapes the conversation during the second wave. In order to fully grasp Bynoe’s weighty claim, I will quote her at length:

This points to a basic premise: unless one has at least a working knowledge of Black Americans and their collective history, one cannot understand Hip Hop culture. While rap music has been globalized, Hip Hop culture has not been and cannot be. Anyone can be taught the technical aspects of deejaying, breakdancing, writing graffiti, and rhyming, or can mimic artists’ dress or swagger, but the central part of Hip Hop culture is the storytelling and the information that it imparts about a specific group of people.<sup>75</sup>

Bynoe, a Black woman, identifies Hip Hop distinctively as a Black culture that is connected to the traumatic experiences of being Black in America. Since it is more than the aesthetic components, such as the music, clothes and dancing, non-Blacks outside of America cannot fully adapt the unique “Black” aspects of the culture. Bynoe does provide space for appropriation but contends that those who attempt outside of the United States have “ill-informed notions about the United States in general, and about Black Americans in particular.”<sup>76</sup> Bynoe provides three examples, South Africa, Cuba, and Japan. In her examination of Japan, she explains “‘Blackness’ became a fad to be consumed, without

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<sup>73</sup> Halifu Osumare, “Beat Streets in the Global Hood: Connective Marginalities of the Hip Hop Globe,” *The Journal of American Culture* 24, no. 1-2 (2001): 172.

<sup>74</sup> Osumare, “Beat Streets in the Global Hood,” 172.

<sup>75</sup> Yvonne Bynoe, “Getting Real about Global Hip Hop,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (2002): 77.

<sup>76</sup> Bynoe, “Getting Real about Global Hip Hop,” 80.

the obligation of learning about or understanding Black people.”<sup>77</sup> Bynoe, along with Osumare, illustrate the importance of Black culture to a globalized understanding of Hip Hop.

Several scholars directly and indirectly responded to Bynoe’s claim making their argument for the authenticity of Hip Hop outside of the Black American experience. Three scholars that respond and provide a similar argument to many others for the authenticity of non-Blacks are Ian Maxwell *Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes: Hip Hop Down Under Comin’ Upper* (2003), Ian Condry *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (2006) and “Yellow B-Boys, Black Culture, and Hip-Hop in Japan: Toward a Transnational Cultural Politics of Race” (2007) and Laura Speers *Hip-Hop Authenticity and the London Scene* (2017). In Maxwell’s ethnography of Hip Hop by White teenagers in Sydney, Australia, he opens with a long history of racism in Australia. In light of this history, he goes on to identify authenticity for these White Hip Hoppas in a similar way that Osumare does and Andy Bennett had explained; he contends that it is location of the self to the world. Since authenticity is tied to the self, it encompasses an articulation of “embodied experiences,” and one’s “sense of linkages” shaped by “social practice and negotiation.”<sup>78</sup>

Condry then adds that Bynoe does not adequately account for the factors that draw Japanese youth to Hip Hop, thereby making the same mistake that she claims others of making in not knowing about Black history. Since knowing someone’s history is a prerequisite for appropriating a culture, Condry asks: “Should everyone read a book about Japan, or better yet live there, before eating sushi or watching an anime movie?”<sup>79</sup> Speers actually mentions all of these works and questions the very notion of authenticity in and of itself. She lays out the authenticity debates into two camps: one side believes that there is a true essence to their culture and the other contends that it is socially constructed. Speers ultimately agrees with Simon Frith, “who suggests values in music such as authenticity are not socially agreed upon constructs but produced through cultural activity, i.e. through ‘living them out’.”<sup>80</sup>

### *Blackness*

This discussion on authenticity and Blackness raises several questions: what is “Blackness,” what about non-African Americans who have contributed to Hip Hop’s creation and how do indigenous and immigrant populations that have already been discussed relate to this “Blackness”? The next book that adds significantly to these issues

<sup>77</sup> Bynoe, “Getting Real about Global Hip Hop,” 83.

<sup>78</sup> Ian Maxwell, *Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes: Hip Hop Down Under Comin’ Upper* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan, 2003) 12, 161-162.

<sup>79</sup> Ian Condry “Yellow B-Boys, Black Culture, and Hip-Hop in Japan: Toward a Transnational Cultural Politics of Race” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 15, no. 3 (2007): 645.

<sup>80</sup> Laura Speers, *Hip-Hop Authenticity and the London Scene: Living Out Authenticity in Popular Music* (London: Routledge, 2017), 16.

is Dipannita Basu's and Sidney Lemelle's edited collection *The Vinyl Ain't Final* (2006). In the Foreword, Robin D. G. Kelley contends that Hip Hop has not "gone global," it has always been global, especially since the pioneers are "the sons and daughters of immigrants who had been displaced by the movement of global capital."<sup>81</sup> Kelley, similar to those of the first wave such as Juan Flores, repositions and reminds Hip Hop scholars of the importance of Jamaicans and Latinidades to the fabric of Hip Hop's identity. Moreover, this volume makes a major addition to global Hip Hop studies, "It bridges the gap between studies of hip hop culture and rap music in the U.S. and its diasporan and global reach."<sup>82</sup> This completely shifts the conversation because Mitchell's volume and other scholars separate Hip Hop outside of the United States from Hip Hop in America. Basu and Lemelle argue against Mitchell's "monolithic and stagnant" view of Hip Hop in the U.S.<sup>83</sup> They do not explicitly use Osumare's connective marginalities, but this book focuses on third world spaces and "those of 'third world' places and peoples in the 'first world'."<sup>84</sup> Therefore, according to Osumare, there is no Black/White, United States/outside of US binary that exist, rather Hip Hop brings the third world together.

Another component that Hua Hsu brings forth in "Seeing Jay-Z in Taipei" (2011) is when the attempts at solidarity across different localities fail. In her critical essay, she explains the ways in which youth of Taiwan had not connected to the struggle that Jay Z had presented to them in the concert and had been more interested in Taiwanese rapper MC Hot Dog. Her example raises bigger questions such as the adaptability of Hip Hop to certain areas and what does Hip Hop become as it goes through the adaptation process? In almost a direct response to Maxwell and those with a similar perspective, she asks: "How does one orient oneself in a sea of such endless connective possibilities?"<sup>85</sup>

Hsu also questions "the very idea of blackness"<sup>86</sup> and this is where Marc Perry's exquisite article "Global Black Self-Fashionings: Hip Hop as Diasporic Space" comes in. Perry takes a look at Hip Hop in Brazil, Cuba, and South Africa and defines Blackness as a "a political signifier of a particular kind of racialized identity, one that binds African-descendant individuals and communities in lived historical terms of past and present."<sup>87</sup> The brilliance of his notion of Blackness is that he provides space to capture folk descended from Africa and recognize the power struggles they endure. Since Blacks are

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<sup>81</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, "Foreword" in *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip-Hop and the Globalisation of Black Popular Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2006) xi.

<sup>82</sup> Dipannita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle, *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip-Hop and the Globalisation of Black Popular Culture*, 1-2.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 5. They also respond to Maxwell and say that authenticity is not solely defined by African American roots while reducing these roots to "outmoded racial politics of essentialism."

<sup>84</sup> Hua Hsu, "Seeing Jay-Z in Taipei," *Daedalus* 140, no. 1 (2011): 163. [https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED\\_a\\_00068](https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00068).

<sup>85</sup> Hsu, "Seeing Jay-Z in Taipei," 163.

<sup>86</sup> Hsu, "Seeing Jay-Z in Taipei," 171.

<sup>87</sup> Marc D. Perry, "Global Black Self-Fashionings: Hip Hop as Diasporic Space." *Identities* 15, no. 6 (2008): 635-664. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890802470660>.

African descended people, Americanized notions of race do not adequately capture what it means to be Black.<sup>88</sup> He also reveals the importance of being clear when talking about “African American” popular culture and “Black” popular culture. He critiques Mitchell’s assessment that Hip Hop is not simply an African American culture and argues “that race (or blackness for that matter) is necessarily” a part of the equation. This politicized Blackness reconfigures Black identity around the world creating a globalized Blackness. Therefore, Perry reveals: “These young people... ultimately realize the Afro-Atlantic itself as a lived social formation. Hip hop in this way can be seen as an active site for the global (re)mapping of black political imaginaries via social dynamics of diaspora.” He illustrates, then, how Hip Hop takes Blacks out of their country (i.e. Malcolm X is no longer an American) and places them within the Afro-Atlantic community.

Perry’s refocusing of the Afro-Atlantic portrays the significance of African diasporas to conceptualizing the issues surrounding Hip Hop authenticity, identity, and immigration. This points to the importance of several works, I will focus on Cheryl Sterling’s *African Roots, Brazilian Rites: Cultural and National Identity in Brazil* (2012).<sup>89</sup> I highlight Sterling’s book because of her usage of Édouard Glissant’s theory of roots and rhizomes. Numerous scholars throughout early global Hip Hop Studies and during the second wave present Hip Hop as having African roots. While Sterling is not against the idea of roots, she builds on Glissant’s notion of rhizome and contends that Afro-Brazilians develop their identity without the enforcement of hegemonic forces.<sup>90</sup> She posits: “Cultural reconversions happening through the hybridic, rhizomatic transposition of ritual forms, I contend, reassemble concepts of Africanness/blackness as markers and anchors for that identity.”<sup>91</sup> Her multifaceted, rhizomatic formation of identity entails the coming together of the past, present, and future (escaping time in a sense), in addition to the process by which this happens (praxis of embodiment), the signs and symbols that are used to construct this identity, and the ideas that Afro-Brazilians have about political freedom. From this perspective, she postulates that “hip-hop is a rhizomatic root of African aesthetic sensibility” because of its “percussive polyrhythms to the improvisational capacities of the disc jockeys (DJs), the verbal virtuosity of the emcees (MCs), and the antiphonal dimension of performance (Osumare 2007; Keyes 1996;

<sup>88</sup> Perry, “Global Black Self-Fashionings.”

<sup>89</sup> Sterling provides a very similar definition of Blackness, she states: “Blackness in this work is a purposeful injunction of a chosen identity as ‘Negra,’ ‘Preta,’ ‘Parda,’ Afro-Brasiliera, or even ‘Afro-descendente,’ in relation to a discourse of empowerment and social transformation” *African Roots, Brazilian Rites: Cultural and National Identity in Brazil* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 8-9.

<sup>90</sup> This is how Sterling describe rhizomes: “Glissant alternatively theorizes the rhizome within the contradictory experiences of cultural contact, reproduced in a network of relations, of fertile contacts and synergies, without a predetermined beginning or predictable end. It is rather part of a cycle of expansion and creation of the new, evident in the polyrooted character of Caribbean subjectivity. With its beginnings in the traumatic memory of slavery and its assertion of creolization, the tentacle-like proliferation of a rhizomatic identity allows differences to have a place; systems of shared belonging may then construct relational identities in concert, out of shared communication, without imposition or warrants from above (9).

<sup>91</sup> Sterling, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites*, 51.



Gottschild 1996).”<sup>92</sup> All of these characteristics points to the ways African roots continue in Afro-Brazilian Hip Hop and how Afro—Brazilians make their identity along with other Africans throughout the diasporas and how they develop Hip Hop in and through a variety of cultural influences not bounded by time or space.

### *Latinidades*

Whereas Perry and Sterling focus on Blacks in Cuba and Brazil, several scholars focus on *Latinidad*, which brings Indigenous and Mestizo communities into the conversation about adaptation, authenticity and identity. Lourdes de Fátima Bezerra Carril, in “Quilombo, Território e Geografia,” through her study in São Paulo, Brazil and discussion of Quilombos, reveals: “Rappers are bringing back the quilombo through the figure of Zumbi dos Palmares.”<sup>93</sup> Marco Cervantes and Lilliana Patricia Saldaña in “Hip hop and Nueva Canción as Decolonial,” adds that “Indigenous, Black, Afromestizos” peoples all had experienced European colonization. These scholars point to the long existing relationship between Blacks and Indigenous people and how their shared histories contribute to their Hip Hop identity.

Moreover, whereas Juan Flores had championed the inclusion of Latinas/os into the narrative of Hip Hop’s manifestation and growth to the West Coast, several works, such as Melissa Castillo-Garsow’s and Jason Nichols’ *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades* (2016), carry on the banner by portraying the significance of “Latin America” to Hip Hop and drawing more attention to the intricacies of Latinos/as’ space in Hip Hop. They frame the discussion by defining Hispanic, Latino and those included in “Latin America”<sup>94</sup> and undefining what has been understood as “Latin American Hip Hop.” More importantly, their research had revealed that “for every Latino ‘theme’ (immigration, discrimination, lack of opportunities) or ‘style’ (Spanish, English, sampling from salsa or Tejano music) there were numerous artists who were both Latino or Latin American and doing something completely different.”<sup>95</sup> Therefore, they use the term Hip Hop Latinidades (Latino-ness) in order to capture the variety and hybridity of cultural expression related to Latin America and Hip Hop.<sup>96</sup>

### *Language*

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<sup>92</sup> Sterling, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites*, 175.

<sup>93</sup> My translation, here is the original text: “No rap, o quilombo é resgatado da imagem da figura de Zumbi dos Palmares.” Derek Pardue in “Hip Hop as Pedagogy: A Look into ‘Heaven’ and ‘Soul’ in São Paulo, Brazil” explains that quilombo “a term referring to the self-liberated African-Indigenous communities dating back to the beginning of the Portuguese participation in the African slave trade” (684).

<sup>94</sup> According to Melissa Castillo-Garsow and Jason Nichols, Hispanic “is a term created by the US government” and Latino refers to those who “stresses Latin America as the ancestral homeland” *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2016), 10.

<sup>95</sup> Castillo-Garsow and Nichols, *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades*, 10.

<sup>96</sup> This perspective provides them space to discuss and include works on Brazil and Haiti even though, as the editors contend, they are not usually included in the parameters of Latin America.



Another major discourse in analyzing authenticity and identity in global Hip Hop studies is on language. While identity and authenticity are imperative to this discourse, it also explicates linguistic characteristics found in Hip Hop, language ideologies, code switching, decolonization and resistance. There are two approaches to studying Hip Hop within this discourse, scholars from the discipline of linguistics who bring a particular training to their study of Hip Hop and non-linguists who recognize the importance of language usage within the Hip Hop segment they are studying. The variety of subjects that this discourse on language address and its intersection with multiple scholarly perspectives provides a clearer socio-historical and political depiction of particular Hip Hop communities within globalization.

Scholars of linguistics in particular have made some of the biggest advancements to not only global Hip Hop studies but also Hip Hop studies and the academy as a whole. Two scholarly works stand out: Alastair Pennycook's *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (2006) and H. Samy Alim's, Ibrahim Awad's, and Alastair Pennycook's edited collection *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (2009). *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* has been cited over one thousand and five hundred times by a variety of scholarly fields. It is mostly referred to because Pennycook details the relationship between English and Hip Hop within the dynamics of globalization. He presents this notion of "transcultural flows" which he describes as "the ways in which cultural forms move, change and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts."<sup>97</sup> In many ways, transcultural flows captures the perspective of several scholars throughout the second wave but he escapes "the debates over globalization versus localization, or neologisms such as glocalization" due to the fact that it elides "the two polarities" and "flatten the dynamics of what is occurring here."

*Global Linguistic Flows* provides a thorough explanation of Hip Hop cultures, which redefines our scholarly understanding of Hip Hop. Alim had first introduced the notion of Hip Hop cultures in *Tha Global Cipa: Hip Hop Culture and Consciousness* (Spady et. al 2006) and then again in the special issue "Glocal Linguistic Flows: Hip-Hop Culture(s), Identities, and the Politics of Language Education" (2007). In this edited collection, Alim explains: "While 'Hip Hop Culture' is still valuable in its broad usage (at a particular level of abstraction), engagement with specific sites of Hip Hop cultural practice, production, and performance demands a perspective that favors the plurality of Hip Hop Cultures over the singular and monolithic 'Hip Hop Culture'." He holds conceptual room for the "Global Hip Hop Nation (GHHN)," and wants to ensure that scholars do not lose sight of the diverse ways varying communities are Hip Hop.

In addition to having that "Hip Hop" feel, *Global Linguistic Flows* "represents what I would call the first book-length, global intellectual cipa of what I have referred to as

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<sup>97</sup> Alastair Pennycook, *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

'Hip Hop Linguistics (HHLx)'."<sup>98</sup> Through building on Pennycook's notion of "transcultural flows," and the centering of language in its analysis of Hip Hop around the world, *Global Linguistic Flows* presents a "sociolinguistics of globalization." This volume conceptualizes language as a culture and elucidates the "specific forms, genres, styles, and forms of literacy practice" of local Hip Hop languages within global social and linguistic processes. In many ways, the perspective of Hip Hop language practices in *Global Linguistic Flows* reverberates throughout the discourse on language during the second wave.

This discourse on language centers language ideology.<sup>99</sup> Scholars detail the ways in which Hip Hoppas make language choices about its structure and usage based on a number of factors, including but not limited to, individual or communal preferences, socioeconomic status, socio-historical background, popular culture, desired identity, presentation of that identity and political stance.<sup>100</sup> The examination of these factors elucidates the ways in which language ideologies intertwine with the Hip Hoppas' political identity, cultural values, performances in public and private spaces and ways of learning. As such, the scholarly discussions of language ideology directly tie into the authenticity debate, linguistic processes, decolonization and resistance. Several scholars, including Sandra Clarke and Philip Hiscock in "Hip-Hop in a Post-Insular Community" (2009), contend that during the indigenization process "hybrid identities via language mixing and code switching from migrant languages,"<sup>101</sup> contribute to the creation of an authentic Hip Hop to that location. This process of localizing Hip Hop languages entails the remixing of African American culture and an engagement with African American English.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, Hip Hop scholars of linguistics highlight the importance of language ideologies in the indigenization of Hip Hop in response to global flows.

Several scholars go into detail about the lexical items being used in Hip Hop around the world that illustrates the both/and relationship between the local and global—there are general characteristics of Hip Hop language and localized differences. Jannis Androutsopoulos and Arno Scholz analyze this phenomenon in "On the

<sup>98</sup> H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook, *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

<sup>99</sup> The oft quoted definition of language ideology is from Michael Silverstein: "a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" - Quentin E. Williams, "Multilingual Activism in South African Hip Hop," *Journal of World Popular Music*, 5(1): (2018): 32.

<sup>100</sup> Alex Perullo and John Fenn "Language Ideologies, Choices, and Practices in Eastern African Hip Hop," 2003; Angela Williams, "'We Ain't Terrorists, but we Droppin' Bombs': Language Use and Localization of Hip Hop in Egypt," 2010; Elina Westinen, "Rapping the 'Better folk': Ideological and Scalar Negotiations of Past and Present," 2017; Quentin E. Williams, "Multilingual Activism in South African Hip Hop," 2018.

<sup>101</sup> Sandra Clarke and Philip Hiscock, "Hip-Hop in a Post-Insular Community: Hybridity, Local Language, and Authenticity in an Online Newfoundland Rap Group," *Journal of English Linguistics* 37, no. 3, (2009): 241–261.

<sup>102</sup> Therefore, speakers can be seen as fashioning selves through language by styling themselves as the other in order to achieve a particular local identity.

Recontextualization of Hip-Hop in European Speech Communities: A Contrastive Analysis of Rap Lyric" (2002) through a linguistic analysis of fifty randomly selected songs from five different countries.<sup>103</sup> Their findings present seven speech act patterns, intertextuality, multilingualism, and colloquial speech. The commonalities they had discovered are the use of English in sixty percent of the German, French and Italian songs; "actionality," which is talking about the action of rapping; and intertextuality involving popular culture references. The local distinctions entail place references, local or regional dialects and usage of the dominant language of the society rappers live in. I highlight these characteristics because several other studies present very similar results.

One important linguistic process emphasized by scholars is code-switching. Emmanuel Taiwo Babalola and Rotimi Taiwo, in "Code-Switching in Contemporary Nigerian Hip-Hop Music" (2009) examination of five Nigerian rappers: Sunny Nneji, Weird MC, D'Banj, P Square and Styl Plus, reveals two types of code-switching. They are: inter-sentential code switching - "ones in which chunks of ideas in different languages feature in turns, thereby producing switches at discourse boundaries," and intra-sentential code switching - "ones in which expressions from other languages are sandwiched between those of a dominant language."<sup>104</sup> They have discovered that Nigerian rappers code-switch between three languages, English, Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba. A Nigerian rapper rapping in Nigerian Pidgin, English and then Nigerian Pidgin in the same line exemplifies intra-sentential code switching. Millicent Quarcoo, Evershed Kwasi Amuzu, and Augustina Pokua Owusu's study of code switching in Ghanaian Hiplife music in "Codeswitching as a Means and a Message in Hiplife Music in Ghana" illustrates the aesthetic effects of code-switching.<sup>105</sup>

In addition to code-switching, an important topic within the discourse on Hip Hop language is decolonization and resistance. Chiara Minestrelli, in *Australian Indigenous Hip Hop the Politics of Culture, Identity, and Spirituality* (2017) posits: "Through linguistic acts (of supremacy), such as the abolishment of Indigenous languages and the imposition of a unified 'national' idiom, colonizers created a distance between 'Themselves' and 'Others,' the colonizer and colonized."<sup>106</sup> As a result of this form of colonization, Hip Hop offers a particular voice and space to decolonize language in Hip Hop communities

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<sup>103</sup> Jannis Androutsopoulos and Arno Scholz, "On the Recontextualization of Hip-Hop in European Speech Communities: A Contrastive Analysis of Rap Lyrics," *PhiN – Philologie im Netz* 19 (2002): 1–42. <http://web.fu-berlin.de/phn/phn19/p19t1.htm>.

<sup>104</sup> Emmanuel Taiwo Babalola and Rotimi Taiwo, "Code-Switching in Contemporary Nigerian Hip-Hop Music," *Itupale Online Journal of African Studies* 1, no. 1.26 (2009).

<sup>105</sup> Millicent Quarcoo, Evershed Kwasi Amuzu, and Augustina Pokua Owusu, "Codeswitching as a Means and a Message in Hiplife Music in Ghana," *Contemporary Journal of African Studies* 2 no. 2 (2014): 1 – 32.

<sup>106</sup> Chiara Minestrelli, *Australian Indigenous Hip Hop the Politics of Culture, Identity, and Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 2017) 15.

around the world. This important point within the discussion on language is another major theme of the second wave – resistance.

### *Politics/Resistance/Decolonization*

In addition to the discourse on language, an overwhelming number of second wave scholars discuss politics in both the traditional sense of nation sovereignty and of power struggles. Along with the overall perspective of global Hip Hop studies, it is imperative to account for the local factors in conceptualizing politics because each area contains a unique set of issues. As Daniel Hammett indicates, scholars must account for “local socio-political history, individual agency and global influence” and “the development of context-specific understandings of power, resistance, ideology and agency.”<sup>107</sup> While there are context-specific struggles, scholars discussing resistance provide a lot of attention to hegemonic Whites, continuing the argument from the first wave on the economic processes associated with globalization and this notion of “coloniality.” They discuss the fundamental ideas of periphery and citizenship; consequently, based on their conceptualization of the modalities of oppression, scholars during the second wave present the variety of ways in which Hip Hoppas decolonize and resist.

A common term used throughout the second wave is “hegemonic whiteness,” which captures the fluid ways in which, socially, sonically, linguistically, and others, Whiteness normalizes and pushes Blackness to the periphery.<sup>108</sup> Along those lines, scholars discuss the legacy of slavery and settler colonialism and how Europeans aim to maintain power after decolonization. Pancho McFarland, Marco Antonio Cervantes and Lilliana Patricia Saldaña call this “coloniality.” Cervantes and Saldaña share Walter Mignolo translation of Anibal Quijano (2000) “el patrón colonial del poder,” which is the “colonial matrix of power.”<sup>109</sup> The colonial matrix of power is a “model of power that is globally hegemonic today and ‘presupposes an element of coloniality’ tied to sixteenth century colonialism and Eurocentrism.”<sup>110</sup> Based on this understanding Cervantes and Saldaña contend “coloniality is the underlying web of relations that was maintained in the U.S., South American, Central America, and the Caribbean after independence from European imperial powers.”<sup>111</sup> Scholars of the second wave bear

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<sup>107</sup> Daniel Hammett, “Reworking and Resisting Globalising Influences: Cape Town Hip-Hop,” *GeoJournal* 77, no. 3 (2012): 417.

<sup>108</sup> Adam Haupt, Quentin E. Williams, and H. Samy Alim, “Hip Hop Activism and Representational Politics” 2018; Paul Khalil Saucier and Kumarini Silva, “Keeping It Real in the Global South” 2014; Christopher Dennis, *Afro-Colombian Hip-Hop: Globalization, Transcultural Music, and Ethnic Identities*, 2011.

<sup>109</sup> Marco Antonio Cervantes and Lilliana Patricia Saldaña, “Hip Hop and Nueva Canción as Decolonial Pedagogies,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 4 no. 1 (2015): 87.

<sup>110</sup> Cervantes and Saldaña, “Hip Hop and Nueva Canción as Decolonial Pedagogies,” 87.

<sup>111</sup> Cervantes and Saldaña, “Hip Hop and Nueva Canción as Decolonial Pedagogies,” 87.

witness to this same concept of coloniality in areas around the world in which Europe has colonized.

Hegemonic Whiteness drives “Blackness” to the periphery, leading to another trope within the conversation on politics during the second wave, “periferia.”<sup>112</sup> Periferia is the Spanish word for periphery and Hip Hop scholars posit that it is more than a geographical position in relation to the center of town. Charlie Hankin identifies periferia as a “geopolitical position of the Global South,”<sup>113</sup> and Derek Pardue says it is an epistemology that is “rooted in the artistic expressions of the ‘marginal’.”<sup>114</sup> Both Pardue in “Brazilian Hip-Hop Material and Ideology: A Case of Cultural Design” and Jennifer Roth-Gordon in “Conversational Sampling, Race Trafficking, and the Invocation of the Gueto in Brazilian Hip Hop” analyze Racionais MC’s song “Periferia é Periferia” (Periphery is Periphery). They reveal, through Racionais MC as theorist, how the periferia is not limited to Brazil, but present in other marginalized places around the world and as a result, attempts to unite “the youth of Brazil’s socially and geographically marginalized communities through a refrain of solidarity” with those in other periferias. The evidence of this idea of a periferia is so widespread that Peter Barrer cites it among Whites in Slovakia, Koen Stroeken describes it in Tanzania and Caroline Mose details its role in Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>115</sup> Mose’s example points to those periferia artists who are physically located in Eastlands, which is not in the geographical margins of Nairobi.

Hip Hop addresses hegemonic Whiteness in a number of ways, scholars redefine concepts such as citizenship and highlight how Hip Hoppas on the ground resist and decolonize. Derek Pardue, in *Cape Verde, Let’s Go: Creole Rappers and Citizenship in Portugal* (2015), contends that citizenship is not just a status ascribed to members of a state; rather, it is a “condition of rights, status, belonging, and participation which changes based on contextual factors, such as political and legal histories, as well as the realities of labor

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<sup>112</sup> Derek Pardue, “Hip Hop as Pedagogy: A Look into ‘Heaven’ and ‘Soul’ in São Paulo, Brazil,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, 80 no. 3 (2007): 673-709; Derek Pardue, “Making Territorial Claims: Brazilian Hip Hop and the Socio-Geographical Dynamics of Periferia,” *City & Society* 22, no. 1 (June 7, 2010): 48-71; Andreia Moassab, “Brasil Periferia(s): A Comunicacao Insurgente do Hip-Hop,” *Sao Paulo: EDUC*, 2011; Alexandre Bárbara-Soares, Rabello-de Castro Lucia, “Música Underground e Resistência Cultural nas Periferias do Rio de Janeiro-um Estudo de Caso,” *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud* 2014 and S. Leppänen and E. Westinen, “Migrant Rap in the Periphery: Performing Politics of Belonging,” *AILA Review* 30 (2017): 1-26.

<sup>113</sup> Charlie Hankin, “The (Latin) American Underground: Havana and Marginocentric Hip Hop” *Atlantic Studies* 14, no. 1 (2017): 83.

<sup>114</sup> Jennifer Roth-Gordon “Conversational Sampling, Race Trafficking, and the Invocation of the Gueto in Brazilian Hip Hop,” in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (London and New York: Routledge, 2006) 63-77.

<sup>115</sup> Peter Barrer, “‘My White, Blue, and Red Heart’: Constructing a Slovak Identity in Rap Music,” 2009; Koen Stroeken, “Immunizing Strategies: Hip-Hop and Critique in Tanzania Africa,” 2005; Caroline Mose, “‘Swag’ and ‘Cred’: Representing Hip-Hop in the African City,” 2013.



chances and cultural expressions.”<sup>116</sup> This perspective of citizenship opens the door to thinking about how many Hip Hoppas are not citizens in their own country and the ways in which Hip Hop provides citizenship.<sup>117</sup> Mumia Abu Jamal says it best in the special issue on Afrikan Hip-hop Caravan, “I am a citizen of a country that does not yet exist.”<sup>118</sup>

The lack of citizenship status directly relates to the ways in which Hip Hop identity construction resists the oppressive identities appointed to those in Hip Hop cultures. Two strands run through this construction throughout the second wave, alignment to the Black freedom struggle and more attention to feminist and LGBTQI identities. In addition to the connection with the freedom struggle during the 1960s, Hip Hop communities connect with Toussaint L’Ouverture, Phillis Wheatley, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth.<sup>119</sup> Scholars illustrate Hip Hop’s greater emphasis on those involved in the freedom struggle other than Malcolm and outside the US such as the parallel movement in Brazil - Movimento Negro Unificado and Amadou Diallo.<sup>120</sup> Nitzsche’s article highlights the significance of focusing on women, wherein the particular set of heroes and ways in which White Supremacy functions as a villain are not usually covered when focusing on men.

Adam Haupt, in “Hip-Hop, Gender and Agency in the Age of Empire” (2003), examines Godessa, the first women South African Hip Hop group to sign a deal, and reveals how women in Hip Hop can have some level of agency through “self-definition.”<sup>121</sup> Haupt identifies their ability to define themselves as a “political act that challenges how patriarchy and capitalism define women” and reveals that “gangsta rap’s gender politics, are a reflection of the prevailing values in society, which are created and sustained by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.”<sup>122</sup> Maria Natália Matias-Rodrigues and Jaileila de Araújo-Menezes also highlights the importance of the presence of women in Hip Hop to addressing hegemonic gender inequalities. Their journal article, “Jovens

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<sup>116</sup> Derek Pardue, *Cape Verde, Let’s Go: Creole Rappers and Citizenship in Portugal* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

<sup>117</sup> Sonya Donaldson, “After the Berlin Wall: Hip-Hop and the Politics of German Reunification,” *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 8, no. 2 (2015): 190-201; Lisa Weems, “Refuting ‘Refugee Chic’: Transnational Girl(Hood)s and the Guerilla Pedagogy of M.I.A.,” *Feminist Formations* 26, no. 1 (2014): 115-42.

<sup>118</sup> Hip-hop Activist Networks “Afrikan Hip-hop Caravan Special Issue,” *Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 1, no. 2 (2014): 161 - 231.

<sup>119</sup> Marc Perry, *Negro Soy Yo*, 2015; Sina A. Nitzsche “Slavery’s Consequences Still Affect Us,” 2018.

<sup>120</sup> Niyi Afolabi, “Brazilian New Wave: Hip Hop and the Politics of Intervention,” 2007; Sonya Donaldson “After the Berlin Wall: Hip-Hop and the Politics of German Reunification, 2015. There is also the fascinating study *From Toussaint to Tupac the Black International since the Age of Revolution* (2009) edited by Michael O. West, William G. Martin, & Fanon Che Wilkins, which lays out the freedom struggle from the 18th century to the 21st century and across geographical boundaries.

<sup>121</sup> Adam Haupt, “Hip-Hop, Gender and Agency in the Age of Empire,” *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, no. 57 (2003): 21-29. doi:10.2307/4066380

<sup>122</sup> Maria Natália Matias-Rodrigues and Jaileila de Araújo-Menezes, “Jovens Mulheres: Reflexões Sobre Juventude e Gênero a Partir do Movimento Hip Hop,” *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, 12, no. 2 (2014): 703-715.



Mulheres: Reflexões Sobre Juventude e Gênero a Partir do Movimento Hip Hop (Young Women: Reflections on Youth and Gender from the Hip Hop Movement)" (2014), highlight women rappers, graffiti and Bgirls in Recife-Northeast of Brazil who point to the gender inequalities in Hip Hop in their area.

P. Khalil Saucier and Kumarini Silva, in "Keeping It Real in the Global South: Hip-Hop Comes to Sri Lanka" (2014), shifts from African and African diasporic people to "Blacks" in Southeast Asia. They make an argument for a politicized Blackness along the same lines as Marc Perry. Saucier and Silva analysis of Hip Hop in Sri Lanka brings forth that Sri Lanka has experienced "several centuries of continued colonization – by the Portuguese, the Dutch and finally the British from whom the country finally gained independence in 1948."<sup>123</sup> This hegemonic Whiteness has contributed to civil war and hybrid identities.<sup>124</sup> Lisa Weems, in "Refuting 'Refugee Chic': Transnational Girl(Hood)s and the Guerilla Pedagogy of M.I.A" (2014) brings a transnational feminist framework to her examination of Sri Lanka and focuses on the Sri Lankan-British rap artist M.I.A. Weems argues that M.I.A. "makes use of refugee chic to reframe the issues of sexualization, silence, victimization, and violence that are the results of (trans)national systems of domination."<sup>125</sup> Weems points to the additional forms of hegemonic Whiteness that a gendered analysis reveals. Therefore, M.I.A. positions herself with a transnational citizenship due to the lack of citizenship she has in her own country plus the racialized and gendered forms of oppression Brown and Black women endure. Her music brings the "digital ruckus" which "provides an important space for critical sociopolitical debate."

Whereas scholars thus far have provided a gendered analysis, Shanté Smalls article on the woman rapper Jean Grae in the special issue "Hip-Hop Culture in a Global Context: Interdisciplinary and Cross-Categorical Investigation" and Pancho McFarland, in *Toward a Chican@ Hip Hop Anti-Colonialism* (2017) pays attention to gender and sexuality.<sup>126</sup> Smalls gives attention to Grae because her artistry is queer relative to heteronormativity and she challenges the "supposed 'naturalness' of heteronormative expectations (rigid masculinity, acquiescent femininity, racial hegemony, nationalism, 'compulsory heterosexuality,' etc.) as a learned set of performances."<sup>127</sup> McFarland's discourse on anti-colonialism theorizes and provides the justification for the ideological battle Hip Hop fights. He centers a two-spirited analysis in the anti-colonial projects because coloniality undermines "all people of Mexican descent by attacking women, la

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<sup>123</sup> P. Khalil Saucier and Kumarini Silva, "Keeping It Real in the Global South: Hip-Hop Comes to Sri Lanka." *Critical Sociology* 40, no. 2 (2014): 295-300.

<sup>124</sup> Saucier and Silva, "Keeping It Real in the Global South."

<sup>125</sup> Lisa Weems, "Refuting 'Refugee Chic': Transnational Girl(Hood)s and the Guerilla Pedagogy of M.I.A.," *Feminist Formations* 26, no. 1 (2014):

<sup>126</sup> Kalle Berggren also examines gender and sexuality in "'No Homo': Straight Inoculations and the Queering of Masculinity in Swedish Hip Hop," *Norma* 7 no. 1 (2012): 50-66.

<sup>127</sup> Shanté Smalls, "'The Rain Comes Down': Jean Grae and Hip Hop Heteronormativity," *American Behavioral Scientist* 55 no. 1 (2010): 3.

jotería and gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders, queers, and two-spirited (GLBTQ2)."<sup>128</sup> He explicates the ways in which colonizers have to ideologically dehumanize natives and Chican@s in order to continue exploiting and dispossessing them. Therefore, an anti-colonial project can use Hip Hop in the same way Jean Grae does to challenge the violent notions of heteronormativity.

### *New Fields of Study*

The growth during the second wave results in more scholarly attention to fields of study that had not been thoroughly reviewed or not researched at all during the first. The fields of study that the second wave of global Hip Hop studies provide a greater emphasis on are religion and education. Then, there are small number of scholarly works on law, business, and theater.<sup>129</sup>

### *Religion*

The main two religions that are discussed are Islam and Christianity with the theme being the ways in which both religions contributed to identity. The pieces on Christianity both locate youth in the periferia and present the ways in which being a Christian aids in their struggles.<sup>130</sup> Angela Maria de Souza and Deise Lucy Oliveira Montardo, in "Music and Musicalities in the Hip Hop Movement: Gospel Rap," provides a more in depth look into "gospel rap" in Florianópolis and Lisboa. They trace the growth of the genre, from those who originally had thought that gospel and rap could not mix, to this mixture being common, detail the relationship between life in the periferia and how that life is reflected in the music and describes how Hip Hop can be used as an evangelizing tool.

Islam and Hip Hop have received more attention in global Hip Hop studies. The oft cited essay is H. Samy Alim's "A New Research Agenda: Exploring the Transglobal Hip Hop Umma in Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop" (2005). Monica Miller and Anthony Pinn reprinted this essay in *The Hip Hop and Religion Reader* (2015) illustrating the importance of this essay. In it, Alim lays out the "transglobal hip hop umma" which

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<sup>128</sup> Pancho McFarland, *Toward a Chican@ Hip Hop Anti-Colonialism*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017) 2.

<sup>129</sup> Dominique Bluher, "Hip-Hop Cinema in France," *Camera Obscura* 16, no. 1 (2001): 77-96; Carol M. Motley and Geraldine Rosa Henderson, "The Global Hip-Hop Diaspora: Understanding the Culture," *Journal of Business Research* 61, no. 3 (2008): 243-253; Stacey Prickett, "Hip-Hop Dance Theatre in London: Legitimising an Art Form," *Dance Research* 31, no. 2 (2013): 174-90; James Cox, "Copyrighting the Hip Hop Blueprint: Lyrical Referencing in the Experience of Australian Hip Hop Artists," In *Hip Hop and the Law: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement* edited by P. Bridgewater, D. Tibbs, and A. D. P. Cummings, (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2015).

<sup>130</sup> Tâmara Lis Reis Umbelino, "Rappers do Senhor: Em Busca De Visibilidade" *Estação Científica Online*, no. 2 (2007): 53-68 and Angela Maria de Souza and Deise Lucy Oliveira Montardo, "Music and Musicalities in the Hip Hop Movement: Gospel Rap," *Vibrant: Virtual Brazilian Anthropology* 8, no. 1 (2011): 7-38.

is “a borderless Islamic nation,” where “citizenship is based on faith” rather than nation-state or colonizing cartographers and “Islamic knowledge, values, teachings, ideas and ideals” spread through this community. He highlights the importance of Hip Hop to the transglobal Muslim community because of its capacity to educate and disseminate information. Alim also discusses “nation-building” activities through which Hip Hoppers study their faith, apply their faith and then go out and operationalize Islam through a variety of activities. Several scholars build on Alim, such as David Drissel and Anders Ackfeldt. Drissel examines the transglobal Hip Hop umma in France in “Hip-Hop Hybridity for a Globalized World: African and Muslim Diasporic Discourses in French Rap Music.” Ackfeldt, in “‘Imma March ‘Toward Ka’ba’: Islam in Swedish Hip-Hop,” explains how Muslims in Sweden use Hip Hop “to promote and perform what is understood as ‘Islamic values,’ such as ethics, peace, social responsibility, and a strong personal belief.”<sup>131</sup>

### *Education*

The increased attention on education has provided more attention but not a large volume of pieces. I could only find one book, Bradley J. Porfilio’s and Michael J. Viola’s edited collection *Hip-Hop(e): The Cultural Practice and Critical Pedagogy of International Hip-Hop* (2012). This volume provides a good representation of global Hip Hop Studies second wave scholarship on education. *Hip-Hop(e)* further theorizes “the emerging field of global hip-hop-its conditions, contradictions, and cultures-as well as its use value for radical social transformation in the classroom and in the streets.”<sup>132</sup> *Hip-Hop(e)* is divided into two parts alongside its purpose. The first part focuses on the usage of Hip Hop pedagogy to fight coloniality. The second part of the book examines Hip-Hop-Based-Education (HHBE) and identifies:

Global hip-hop’s effectiveness for conscientization-or the ability to develop a critical awareness of social realities, promoting democratic and humanizing education as well as celebrating the lived experiences of those historically marginalized from the mainstream educational institutions.<sup>133</sup>

The majority of the work outside of the classroom elucidates the ways in which Hip Hop pedagogy is used to combat hegemonic Whiteness. For example: Derek Pardue describes the Casa de Cultura Hip Hop in Diadema, Brazil which is a “point of convergence between community and the state, performance and education, popular culture and agentic citizenship.”<sup>134</sup> Also, Rebecca Cains discusses the effectiveness of improvisatory pedagogical practice based on an Australian Museum sponsored

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<sup>131</sup> Anders Ackfeldt, “‘Imma March ‘Toward Ka’ba’: Islam in Swedish Hip-Hop,” *Contemporary Islam* 6, no. 3 (2012): 1.

<sup>132</sup> Bradley J. Porfilio and Michael J. Viola, *Hip-Hop(e): The Cultural Practice and Critical Pedagogy of International Hip-Hop*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2012) 1.

<sup>133</sup> Porfilio and Viola, *Hip-Hop(e)*, 11.

<sup>134</sup> Derek Pardue, “Hip Hop as Pedagogy: A Look into ‘Heaven’ and ‘Soul’ in São Paulo, Brazil,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, 80 no. 3 (2007): 673-709.

workshop tour of two artists, Many Rhymes and One Rhythm, in 2005. H. Samy Alim, in “Global ill-literacies: Hip hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Literacy” (2011), advances the subfield of global Hip Hop studies by bringing together the scholarship of global Hip Hop studies and critical Hip Hop pedagogies. Alim focuses on the classroom and argues against pedagogical approaches that clearly illustrate the educators’ distance from Hip Hop culture. He thus contends for ill-literacies - “agentive, progressive, linguistic acts of identification and social transformation in that youth’s spoken, rhymed, and written texts challenge prescriptive, restrictive, and antidemocratic notions of culture, citizenship, language, literacy, and education.”<sup>135</sup>

### Third Wave 2019: Beginning of the End of Global Hip Hop Studies

I argue that this special issue “If I Ruled the World,” commences the third wave of global Hip Hop studies. The defining characteristic that I envision for the third wave is a shift from global Hip Hop studies to Hip Hop studies. This conception of Hip Hop studies recognizes Hip Hop studies as Hip Hop, thereby aligning Hip Hop studies with Hip Hop’s global identity. Additionally, moving forward from and building off of the expansive body of literature on Hip Hop, the aim is to produce academic work from a global perspective. Before I lay out how I consider Hip Hop studies can move forward, I first provide my response to the scholarship of the first two waves.

The first two waves present several key themes that I will respond to: the lack of focus on particular elements of Hip Hop and engagement with academic fields, the debate on Hip Hop’s origins, the focus on globalization and the conversation on authenticity. Early Hip Hop studies and the second wave only scratch the surface when it comes to deejaying, graffiti and breakin’. Some regional histories of Hip Hop in mention these elements. Acknowledging a small number of journal articles, I contend that this is a significant gap in Hip Hop studies that requires attention.<sup>136</sup> Additionally, there is a significant gap in research on gender and sexuality in Hip Hop. It is imperative that the third wave does not focus solely on rap music and rappers.

#### *Hip Hop Origins*

One point of the first two waves that I did not cover in the literature review of the second wave and is important to moving forward is the origin of Hip Hop. Whereas many scholars throughout the first wave identify Hip Hop as having roots in Africa, H. Samy Alim, Awad Abraham and Alastair Pennycook’s edited collection, *Global Linguistic*

<sup>135</sup> H. Samy Alim, in “Global Ill-Literacies: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Literacy” *Review of Research in Education* 35, (2011): 131.

<sup>136</sup> During the second phase, Mary Fogarty has published numerous essays on breakin’ and Imani Johnson has a book forthcoming on this element. The one book that I could find on djing is Claudia Assef’s *Todo DJ ja Sambu: A Historia do Disc-Joquei no Brasil* (Sao Paulo: Conrad Livros, 2003).

*Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (2009), presents alternative origins of Hip Hop. In Alastair Pennycook and Tony Mitchell's "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging Locality" chapter in particular, they argue for an understanding of Hip Hop that "has always been local."<sup>137</sup> I highlight their argument because they bring up the various scholarly perspectives on Hip Hop's origin. On one hand, they point to Somali-Canadian MC K'Naan who posits that Hip Hop is African and has been Americanized in the US. They then cite Senegalese Hip Hop group Daara J song "Boomerang."<sup>138</sup> The "Boomerang Hypothesis" is that Hip Hop had been "born in Africa, brought up in America," and then "come full circle" back to Africa.<sup>139</sup> But Pennycook and Mitchell do not stop there, rather they bring in Australian Indigenous artist Wire MC who expresses that they have long been expressing their "stories, our beliefs, our fears, our superstitions through song and dance."<sup>140</sup> As a result, if Hip Hop comes out of the indigenous local Australian culture and MC K'Naan indicates that Hip Hop comes out of the local African cultures then "it is not fruitful to pursue the true origins of Hip Hop."<sup>141</sup> Rather, they argue that Hip Hop "is a continuation of Indigenous traditions; it draws people into a new relationship with cultural practices that have a history far longer than those of current popular music."<sup>142</sup>

While I recognize the desire to ensure that local cultures' roles are not lost after Hip Hop has indigenized in a particular area, I posit that we can provide a more nuanced understanding of Hip Hop origins. First, their linguistics and popular music studies background shape their analysis. They examine language, and the artists they cite focus on the aesthetics of Hip Hop. It is widely accepted that Hip Hop has four elements and this analysis does not account for deejaying and graffiti. Also, as I explained in the introduction, my multifaceted conception of Hip Hop considers the collective consciousness of the people and Hip Hop as a way of life. I posit that Hip Hop is an African diasporic phenomenon. Although scholars throughout the first wave lay out the landscape of the Bronx in the 1960s and 1970s, they do not take that into account. Pennycook, Mitchell and a plethora of scholars refer to Hip Hop as an African American culture. It is this myopic perspective that contributes to the inadequate arguments against Hip Hop.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Alastair Pennycook and Tony Mitchell, "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging Locality," in *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* edited by H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook (London: Routledge, 2008), 35.

<sup>138</sup> This same song and ideology are cited by several other scholars such Halifu Osumare's *The Hiplife in Ghana West African Indigenization of Hip-Hop* (2012) and Msia Clark *Hip Hop in Africa: Prophets of the City and Dustyfoot Philosophers* (2018)

<sup>139</sup> Pennycook and Mitchell, "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging Locality," 34.

<sup>140</sup> Pennycook and Mitchell, "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging Locality," 35.

<sup>141</sup> Pennycook and Mitchell, "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging Locality," 35.

<sup>142</sup> Pennycook and Mitchell, "Hip Hop as Dusty Foot Philosophy: Engaging Locality," 35.

<sup>143</sup> The inadequate arguments against Hip Hop I am referring to here are those such as Hip Hop is misogynistic, hurting the Black community, and promotes negative stereotypes of the Black community. These arguments can stand when identifying Hip Hop solely as an African American culture and the rap



In order to begin to fully grasp Hip Hop's origin, we must move away from the conception of African roots and towards an African diasporic phenomenon. Influenced by Jeffrey Decker's "The State of Rap: Time and Place in Hip Hop Nationalism" and KRS' *The Gospel of Hip Hop: First Instrument* (2009), I assert that Hip Hop is uniquely interconnected with Africa and African people. Decker indicates that nation conscious rappers find their cultural heritage in Egypt and KRS says that between 1968 and 1974 "Hip Hop (sic) introduced itself to the world."<sup>144</sup> The implication of KRS' introduction is that Hip Hop had already existed before 1968. The commencement of Hip Hop in Africa is challenging to explain because ideas such as roots and origins do not accurately depict my conception of Hip Hop's ontology. Based on the idea of collective consciousness, Hip Hop is not confined to space or time. Therefore, choosing a beginning or origin is problematic.

To address the conundrum of defining Hip Hop's temporal identity, I turn to Cheryl Keyes' excellent work, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness* (2004). Keyes contends that rap's origins can be found in Africa, specifically the African bards who had "played as purveyors of the past, recorders and guardians of history, and scholars of African culture."<sup>145</sup> Keyes explains that when a bard performs, they release a powerful force called nyama, which is "the energy of action."<sup>146</sup> Nyama contains transmutational power to change humans and the material. While I am arguing against Hip Hop's origins, Keyes' description of nyama is useful, especially since it has materialized in Africa. I contend that the elements and materials that make up Hip Hop come out of this nyama. Since energy can never be created or destroyed, rather it can only be transferred, this *African* transformational energy that exists outside of space and time eventually manifested in the Bronx in the early 1970s.

### *Ciphas and Flows*

In addition to this immaterial understanding of Hip Hop, I move away from the idea of "African roots" and origins through the work of Edouard Glissant and Gerhard Kubik to Relations, ciphaz and transcultural flows.<sup>147</sup> I problematize the notion of African

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music that is played in popular culture. As this essay has shown, the move towards an African diasporic and global phenomenon reveal the inadequacies of these arguments because we need to consider the many Hip Hop cultures, identities, and elements that are so much more than popular rap music.

<sup>144</sup> Lawrence "KRS-One" Parker, *The Gospel of Hip Hop: First Instrument* (Brooklyn: Power House, 2009), 198.

<sup>145</sup> Cheryl Lynette Keyes, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 18.

<sup>146</sup> Keyes, *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*, 20.

<sup>147</sup> I am primarily using these concepts of Relations, ciphaz and transcultural flows to provide the language to begin to account for the historical specificities that contribute to Hip Hop's creation. My usage of theory is informed by history. In the translated text of Edouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relations* (1999), Relations is capitalized throughout the text.

roots for several reasons: the connection between the concept of roots and European enslavement and colonization lends itself toward a linear progression from Africa to New York. As a result, it can potentially lead to a belittling of Africa where Africa is only good to provide the resources of the culture; it therefore paints a static and abstract picture of Africa that does not address the vibrancy of African cultures. As previously discussed, Cheryl Sterling identifies Hip Hop as a rhizomatic root, building off the work of Edouard Glissant. I refer back to Glissant as well, who explains how rootedness is connected to European expansion. A component of Glissant's overall argument in *Poetics of Relations* (1997) is to challenge his notion of a totalitarian root.<sup>148</sup> Glissant states that root identity "is preserved by being projected onto other territories, making their conquest legitimate and through the project of a discursive knowledge."<sup>149</sup> After colonization, he posits that nations accept the European discourse of power, "the totalitarian drive of a single, unique root."<sup>150</sup> Moreover, specifically focusing on Africa, Stuart Hall states: "The original 'Africa' is no longer there."<sup>151</sup>

In addition to Glissant's contention with roots, Gerhard Kubik also highlights other concerns with using this conception. In his book *Africa and the Blues* (1999) he moves away from searching for the "African roots" of the blues, which initially he had been interested in and noticed in African American Studies. His problem with the search for African roots is the vagueness of the perspective and the connotations it carries of thinking about centuries-old traditions of Africa.<sup>152</sup> He shares in an interview: "The concept insinuates that one continent is a provider of musical raw material to be processed somewhere else. Now to us in Africa, this is not acceptable. We are not roots to anyone."<sup>153</sup>

Instead of roots, both Glissant and Kubik are in favor of a multiplicity of factors influencing identity and culture that cannot be traced back to a specific point in time. This is where nyama is useful in contextualizing Hip Hop's ontology. Using Hip Hop language, we can identify the transcultural interaction that comes out of nyama as ciphaz and flows. Flows and ciphaz happen when two peoples (nations, communities etc.)

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<sup>148</sup> He explains that during European expansion, as Europeans had taken over a land, they uprooted indigenous people and literally transformed the identity of the land. The land no longer had belonged to the indigenous people and raises the question of who does it belong to: the first inhabitants or deported Africans? European domination has changed Indigenous land to the point where it is no longer "a rooted absolute," while implementing a discourse of power and fixation (rootedness).

<sup>149</sup> Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 144.

<sup>150</sup> This root identity does not aim and strive for relationships with others.

<sup>151</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Theorizing Diaspora* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 231.

<sup>152</sup> Gerhard Kubik, *Africa and the Blues* (Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1999).

<sup>153</sup> Stuart Hall also goes against the stagnant perspective of Africa, "We must not conclude with the West which, precisely, normalises and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the primitive, unchanging past" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 231). Banning Eyre, "Africa and The Blues: An Interview with Gerhard Kubik," *Afropop Worldwide*, April 9, 2007. Accessed on May 20, 2017 <https://afropop.org/articles/africa-and-the-blues-an-interview-with-gerhard-kubik>.

interact with each other and there is some level of exchange, ranging from the introduction of a musical instrument to the libraries in Islamic Spain.<sup>154</sup> Flows go any direction between cultures and when flows go back and forth, they create a cipa. Kubik describes the cipa like this:

Like any other innovative development, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century genre to be called blues was the result of a chain of determinants linked by cause and effect that can be traced to various other times and places until the traces vanish in the anonymity of sourceless history.<sup>155</sup>

Kubik gets at the many links that flows between African cultures and throughout the continent. Glissant makes a similar argument in making his case for the poetics of Relations instead of the colonizing roots concepts.<sup>156</sup> He explains the “Poetics of Relations” in this way: “each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other.”<sup>157</sup> His relational perspective opposes the solitary root and “strives to know the totality of the world yet already knows he will never accomplish this-and knows that is precisely where the threatened beauty of the world resides.”<sup>158</sup> Glissant’s relational theory entails that there are close to an infinite number of interactions that connects people around the world and elucidates the ways in which interactions between different peoples leads to the expansion of energy and cultural creativity.<sup>159</sup> This chaos, unbounded by time and space, recognizes that Relations “senses, assumes, opens, gathers, scatters, continues, and transforms the thought of these elements, these forms, and this motion.”<sup>160</sup> This “chaos is not chaotic,” rather it is a cipa.

From this Glissantian perspective of Relations, we can attempt to trace the cultural flows and ciphas throughout the continent of Africa that contribute to the manifestation

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<sup>154</sup> David Levering Lewis, *God’s Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570-1215* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

<sup>155</sup> Gerhard Kubik, *Africa and the Blues* (Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>156</sup> In relating Glissant’s theory to Hip Hop, it is interesting that he uses the idea of poetics to describe his relational theory. The translation of his work makes the word choice even more poignant. There are two definitions for poetics, according to Merriam-Webster “written in verse” and according to Cambridge dictionary “very beautiful or expressing emotion.” The lyrical qualities of Hip Hop can be described the same way and verses are actual components of a song. Also, when I spoke with Tasha Iglesias about *Poetics of Relations*, she indicated that Glissant sounds like a spoken word artist.

<sup>157</sup> Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relations* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 11,

<sup>158</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relations*, 20.

<sup>159</sup> He explains it this way: “How have cultures-Chinese or Basque, Indian or Inuit, Polynesian or Alpine-made their way to us, and how have we reached them? What remains to us of all the vanished cultures, collapsed or exterminated, and in what form is our experience, even now, of the pressure of dominant cultures? Through, what fantastic accumulations of how many existences, both individual and collective? Let us try to calculate the result of all that. We will be incapable of doing so. Our experience of this confluence will forever be only one part of its totality” (*Poetics of Relations*, 153-154).

<sup>160</sup> I capitalized the R in relations to point to Glissant’s identification of the poetics of Relation and not the generally understood conception of relationships. Glissant proclaims that since identities are extended through relations with others “we no longer need to add: relation between what and what? This is why the French word Relation, which functions somewhat like an intransitive verb, could not correspond, for example, to the English term relationship” (*Poetics of Relations*, 27).

of Hip Hop. Numerous scholars have already traced the ciphaz with Africans other Africans and between Africans with Europeans and Asians. Stuart Hall indicates that culture in Africa is “always-already fused, syncretised, with other cultural elements.”<sup>161</sup> Here is a small example of scholarly documentation that scratches that surface of Glissant’s Relations and highlights the cultural flows and ciphaz with African peoples. Michael Gomez discusses the extensive history of Egyptians with other Africans, Europeans and Asians and Hebrews in particular; Africans from Egypt, Nubia, the Sahara desert and West Africa relationship with Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans during ancient Graeco-Roman world; trades of goods during the 15th century between Portuguese, Italians and Africans; the transatlantic slave trade between Africans and several European nations;<sup>162</sup> and the relationships between African peoples such as the Fulbe, Bambara, Mande, and Berber within Africa.<sup>163</sup> Malawian historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza posits that there are “four dominant dimensions of the global African diasporas, namely, the intra-Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and Atlantic diasporas” and provide specific examples such as Ethiopia trading with Sri Lanka since the 5th century.<sup>164</sup>

Drawing upon the extensive cultural flows leading up to the transatlantic slave trade and with Asia, scholars also reveal the tremendous amount of Relations or ciphaz throughout the transatlantic and what eventually becomes the Americas. Although the slave trade legally ended in 1808, Gomez highlights that Europeans continued to bring Africans over after this date.<sup>165</sup> He also brings forth the relationships with Africans throughout the transatlantic, from Negroes in North America, to the negritude of francophone areas to *negrismo* in Spanish-speaking locales.<sup>166</sup> Additionally diasporic Africans continue the ciphaz by traveling to the continent and pan-African conferences such as the first one held in London.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, the Europeans carrying of Africans to First Nation land west of the Atlantic that creates the ciphaz between varying European nations, African peoples and Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, there is the cultural flow along with movement throughout the Americas, the slave trade between the Caribbean

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<sup>161</sup> Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, no. 36 (1989): 78. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44111666>.

<sup>162</sup> Michael Angelo Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>163</sup> Michael Angelo Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1998), 46.

<sup>164</sup> Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic,” *African Affairs* 104, no. 414 (2005), 35.

<sup>165</sup> Michael Angelo Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 142.

<sup>166</sup> Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora*, 189.

<sup>167</sup> Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 180.

and British colonies;<sup>168</sup> the domestic slave trade within the British Colonies; the self-emancipations to Canada, Spanish Florida, Caribbean, North and out West. Alongside the well-known Great Migration, there is the movement from the Caribbean to North America during the 20th century with some going to New York.

This brief and incomplete account of African Relations with others highlight significant cultural exchanges throughout time and space, including an immeasurable number of flows and ciphaz that collide with the Bronx community in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Glissant's description of memory explains how griots are ciphering with teenagers on Sedgwick Ave. He states: "Memory in our works is not a calendar memory; our experience of time does not keep company with the rhythms of month and year alone."<sup>169</sup> As a result "our generations are caught up within an extended family in which our root stocks have diffused and everyone had two names, an official one and an essential one-the nickname given by his community."<sup>170</sup> Cheryl Sterling describes memory, cultural practices and African family when discussing how the spiritual exist in the body this way: "These oral-kinetic inscriptions on the body, the formulaic chants, songs, calls, prayers, and divination sequences are integral to the African matrix that traversed traumatic space and lives because of the 'praxis of embodiment' that keeps memory refreshed."<sup>171</sup> Sterling's description brings together our understanding of the ways in which African diasporic peoples living in the Bronx join into the ciphaz and flows by carrying rhythm, knowledge, memory and cultural creativity in their bodies. Glissant and Sterling help us to go beyond the limits of time and space, by re-envisioning African bodies as portals to every cultural flow and ciphaz.

While I am not attempting to make an argument for the spiritual, these scholars point to the necessity of creating space for the unseen forces acting on Africans in the Bronx and provide a perspective that can help us to make sense of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon. As many of the scholars have explained throughout the first wave, the Bronx not only included Africans from several diasporas, which elucidates Glissant's desire for community and not a domineering solitary group, but, also, the actual challenging of hegemonic Whites, the mixing of cultural aesthetics, and a desire to be identified as African people.<sup>172</sup> Hip Hoppas Doug E. Fresh and Prof. X articulate Hip Hop's African identity. Doug E. Fresh shares in an interview: "And when I went to Africa some of the brothers over there told me that they think that it's African, tribal. I never

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<sup>168</sup> Hilary Beckles, "'An Unfeeling Traffick': The Intercolonial Movement of Slaves in the British Caribbean, 1807-1833," In *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, edited by Walter Johnson and Davis David Brion, 256-74. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

<sup>169</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relations*, 72.

<sup>170</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relations*, 72.

<sup>171</sup> Sterling, *African Roots, Brazilian Rites: Cultural and National Identity in Brazil*, 42.

<sup>172</sup> Carolyn Cooper discusses the relationship between reggae and rap and highlights several rap songs that are Jamaican origin in "Ragamuffin Sounds Crossing Over from Reggae to Rap and Back," 1998. David Toop explains how Bambaataa got the name of Zulu nation from a 1960s film where the Zulus overpowered the British in *The Rap Attack: African Jive to New York Hip Hop* (1984).



looked at it like that. And it was *embedded* in me, and it just came out.”<sup>173</sup> Doug E also says that Hip Hop is “very spiritual” and “very tribal.”<sup>174</sup> Prof. X claims: “Because, via the drum it connects our African genes whether we are conscious of our connections or not.”<sup>175</sup> The words of Doug E and Prof. X can be easily understood in light of Glissant and Sterling notions of memory, spirituality, the body and the African network of ciphaz and flows.

One question that a recognition of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon manifesting in the Bronx may raise is how do we reconcile the importance of the Bronx and the presence of Hip Hop in regions around the world? Glissant is adamant about diasporic spaces not becoming rooted territories. Actually, this perspective goes along with not recognizing American culture as imperialist. Again, Africans in America have a contested relationship with America where some do not claim the American nationality. Also, the Bronx is not a root just like Africa is not a root. The Bronx, North America and South America are “produced in the chaotic network of Relation”<sup>176</sup> and offers a clearer depiction of relational networks on a particular land due the numerous peoples who have contacted this land for a clearly identifiable five hundred years. Therefore, I posit, in the same way we have followed the ciphaz and flows that lead to the Bronx, we can now connect them to the Hip Hop network of relations in the Americas. Moving forward, I contend that we attempt to trace the flows and ciphaz between peoples along with Hip Hop’s growth.

### *Black Internationalism - Reconsidering Glocalization*

The identification of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon can address several of the other key discussions through the first two waves, glocalization, authenticity and language. Since scholars have provided enough time analyzing Hip Hop based on Robertson’s glocal perspective, we should shift towards focusing on Hip Hop across regional boundaries. From an African diasporic perspective, there is a long history of “Black internationalism.” In addition to the great work done by scholars connecting Hip Hop in particular regions to the Black freedom struggle, Michael O. West’s, William G. Martin’s, and Fanon Che Wilkins’ edited collection *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (2009) does an exceptional job of conveying the Black freedom struggle focusing on a time period between the late 1700s to the 21st century and on both sides of the Atlantic. They define “Black internationalism” as

[A] product of consciousness, that is, the conscious interconnection and interlocution of black struggles across man-made and natural boundaries including the boundaries of nations, empires,

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<sup>173</sup> Joseph D. Eure and James G Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap: The Hip Hop Vision*, (New York: PC International Press, 1991) 5.

<sup>174</sup> Eure and Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap*, 5.

<sup>175</sup> Eure and Spady, *Nation Conscious Rap*, 191.

<sup>176</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 144.

continents, oceans, and seas. From the outset, black internationalism envisioned a circle of universal emancipation, unbroken in space and time.<sup>177</sup>

The key component of their depiction of Black internationalism is the connection they make of Black internationals across space and time. The book elucidates “how local struggles intersected with one another across diverse boundaries to form, loosely and informally, a black international that was greater than the sum total of its constituent parts.”<sup>178</sup> Whereas scholars have used glocalization to account for the processes of globalization while recognizing the ways in which the local creates its own Hip Hop, Black internationalism pushes scholars of global Hip Hop studies to think about the spatial and temporal boundaries of the local. Moreover, West and Martin spotlight non-Blacks who supported Black internationalism such as the Comintern. The Comintern had been “perhaps, the era’s sole international white-led movement to adopt an avowedly antiracist platform, and certainly the only one formally dedicated to a revolutionary transformation of the global political and racial order.”<sup>179</sup>

As a result, I propose that in reconsidering the local boundaries of time and space, we draw attention to the ciphaz and flows of Hip Hop. Technological advancements greatly factor into contemporary analysis of Hip Hop. A good example that accounts for technology and transcends boundaries is Jessica Pabón-Colón’s interview with the Ladies Destroying Crew (LDC) of Nicaragua and Costa Rica “Daring to Be ‘Mujeres Libres, Lindas, Locas.’” Pabón-Colón explain how these women “do feminism” through their graffiti and document their work on Facebook, Tumblr and blogs. Her informal research had occurred through a private Facebook group “Female International Graffiti” where she had first discovered LDC art. In the interview, LDC share that they had met first on Facebook and then in person. In addition to women from two different regions coming together and using technology to network, they explicitly express why they use the Internet, LA KYD says “It’s a way of spreading my art without borders.”<sup>180</sup> The transcultural flows between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, expands over the Internet to the point where the cipa continues around the world, even Pabón-Colón joins the cipa. As more Hip Hoppas read her work, check out LDC graffiti and discover more graffiti artists the cipa keeps going. Furthermore, all of the socio-historical and cultural elements that influence Nicaraguan women graffiti artists collide with those of Costa Rica bringing together multiple ciphaz and flows.

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<sup>177</sup> Michael O. West, William G. Martin, and Fanon Che Wilkin, *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2009) 1.

<sup>178</sup> West, Martin and Wilkin, *From Toussaint to Tupac*, 1.

<sup>179</sup> West, Martin and Wilkin, *From Toussaint to Tupac*, 16.

<sup>180</sup> Jessica Pabón-Colón, “Daring to Be ‘Mujeres Libres, Lindas, Locas,’” in *La Verdad: An International Dialogue on Hip Hop Latinidades*, edited by Melissa Castillo-Garsow and Jason Nichols (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2016) 211.

*Appropriation/Authenticity Discussion*

The perspective of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon that is inclusive of multiple flows and ciphaz is relevant to the appropriation and authenticity discussion as well. I claim that the best approach to this appropriation and authenticity discussion is to think about Hip Hop on a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum, that I believe Hip Hop can agree on, is hegemonic Whiteness. As discussed, this is the hegemonic Whiteness in which Whites maintain a position of power while non-Whites are subjugated. This position of power is maintained through a variety of ways. While we can all agree on one end of the spectrum, the other end is where Hip Hop can discuss further. I believe that a critical understanding of the Bronx is opposite of hegemonic Whiteness. I choose the change of the decade, from the late 1960s into the early 1970s as the historical time. During this moment, the many flows and ciphaz of African cultures, worldviews, politics, languages, and way of existing in the world reveals itself to and through a community of diverse African diasporic peoples in many of the same ways that the flows and ciphaz interacted with Africans and those experiencing dispossession. Therefore, I conceptualize this spectrum to have a thriving and vibrant African and African diasporic community coming together against oppression on one side and hegemonic Whiteness aiming to keep control on the other.

This reframing of the appropriation and authenticity discussion does not ask how people outside of the US appropriate African American popular culture. Rather, it questions where that community or individual who claims Hip Hop is on the scale? In many ways, this brings together components of all the scholarly contributions to discovering “real Hip Hop.” Yvonne Bynoe almost described the space on the scale close to African diasporic phenomenon by identifying the specialized identity of Blackness and tell their story. Glissant’s and Sterling’s description of memory reveals the embodied nature of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon. As already mentioned, Alastair Pennycook and Tony Mitchell point to Somalian MC K’Naan and Australian Indigenous Wire MC to situate the origins of Hip Hop within indigenous traditions, but I would like to point out that it is not a coincidence that they choose two Africans to make their argument.<sup>181</sup> The “Boomerang” hypothesis is incorrect because it creates boundaries that do not exist between Africans and African diasporic peoples. The flows and ciphaz that make up Hip Hop never stops, and the ancestors are present in New York and Africa and Australia because those are all the places Africans have been. As a result, I argue that only those who can embody the African flows and ciphaz can fully inhabit that space on the spectrum.

In between the two boundaries of the spectrum, we can locate Osumare’s connective marginalities, Speer’s “living out” cultures, and Maxwell’s notion of location of self to the world. Additionally, West’s and Martin’s description of the Comintern provides the ideal model for Whites to engage with Hip Hop. My spectrum model also

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<sup>181</sup> Scholars argue that the Indigenous inhabitants of Australia have migrated from Africa.

helps us better understand the concerns surrounding appropriation. The dangers of moving away from the African diasporic identity to Whiteness are the ways in which Hip Hop perpetuates White Supremacy. In examining African and African diasporic communities, many of the elements of Hip Hop are found throughout the community. There is a rhythm to African communities, communal dances are normal, girls pick up on double dutching and hula hooping quite easily, it is not unusual to see a circle form to rap or just talk, and do not be surprised if members of a community are “making beats” on a lunchroom table. My concern with many of the scholarly works on Hip Hop is that scholars have found particular individuals or groups to make their argument but the majority of that city, region or country do not hold the same views on Hip Hop or treat people justly. Additionally, while Hip Hop maybe beneficial in some way to that particular individual or community, they still play a role in supporting oppression.

Picking up on the scholarly discussion of Hip Hop in Japan, Japanese Hip Hop provides an example of how Hip Hop can provide a voice for the youth yet still perpetuate racism. I already shared Ian Condry’s response to Yvonne Bynoe about Hip Hop in Japan. The next scholar to respond to Condry is Dexter Thomas in “Niggers and Japs: The Formula Behind Japanese Hip-Hop’s Racism,” where he argues “one aspect of Japanese hip-hop that appears to have largely escaped academic attention is the fact that while hip-hop culture is generally assumed to be anti-establishment, Japanese hip-hop is at times explicitly nationalist, or even racist.”<sup>182</sup> Thomas says directly to Condry (and Osumare because Condry uses connective marginalities) “‘connectivity’ between blacks and Japanese can be manufactured, ‘marginalities’ can be imagined, and borrowed ‘oppression’ can be in turn wielded against the oppressed.”<sup>183</sup> He drives his very strong argument home by sharing and analyzing Japanese rapper K Dub Shine remarks at an event celebrating the translation of Condry’s *Hip Hop Japan*. At this event, Shine answer a question about using the term “Jap” by making “a fictive ‘connective marginality’” between Jap and the N word.<sup>184</sup> Thomas explains that Jap does not even come close to carrying the weight and history of the trauma associated with the N word. The only reason Shine makes this comparison is to address his own anxiety and desire to affiliate with Blackness. More importantly, Shine’s answer does not acknowledge Japan’s colonization of other countries. While some Japanese Hip Hop can have an appreciation for Blacks and the culture, just like Shine, their involvement can play a crucial role in propagating imperialism.

### *The N Word and Bias*

Thomas’ analysis of Japanese Hip Hop using the N word also applies to non-Black scholars using the N word. Non-Black scholars’ usage of the N word points to a bigger

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<sup>182</sup> Dexter Thomas, “Niggers and Japs: The Formula Behind Japanese Hip-Hop’s Racism,” *Social Identities* 22 no. 2 (2016): 210-211.

<sup>183</sup> Thomas, “Niggers and Japs,” 211.

<sup>184</sup> Thomas, “Niggers and Japs,” 216.

question of scholar's position in relation to Hip Hop and the people they are writing about. In the special issue "Hip Hop and Religion And," I wrote a statement after the article of a White scholar specific to him not typing it out.<sup>185</sup> Some scholars may not be aware but there is a longstanding debate on who can even say the N word and along those lines, who can type it out.<sup>186</sup> I am on the side of not even wanting Blacks to call each other by that name. Being Hip Hop means taking accountability for one's actions. I challenge Hip Hop scholars to be accountable to Hip Hop.

There is a necessity of bringing up accountability in this particular situation because scholars are blind to their own racism, cis-sexism, ableism and other ways in which they perpetuate oppression. Thomas is a Black male and Ian Condry is a White male, it is not a coincidence that Condry (who types out the N word) did not home in on its usage in his analysis. There are several scholarly works by non-Blacks in which it is typed out.<sup>187</sup> Being a scholar in the academy does not provide a license to use it or spell it out. White scholars who have spelled out the N word are not aware of their own racism and the current publishing system does not catch these biases. In most cases, White scholars are writing to Whites other Whites, the pieces are being sent to publishers with mostly White reviewers and they are all talking about an African diasporic culture. Along those same lines, while writing about Hip Hop may be an academic exercise, the experiences of colonization, coloniality, hegemonic Whiteness, dispossession and other oppressive events that have destroyed African diasporic lives raises the stakes and brings a heaviness to this subject. As a result, non-Black scholars and especially White scholars need to recognize their position when studying, researching and writing about Hip Hop.<sup>188</sup>

### Moving Forward

Following up on my analysis of the first two waves, here I put forward conceptions for moving global Hip Hop studies to Hip Hop studies while maintaining a global outlook. I recommend that Hip Hop studies privilege African and African diasporic scholars, that we implement performance studies into our examination of Hip Hop and that we look at Hip Hop as truly global.

*Privilege African and African diasporic scholars*

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<sup>185</sup> Travis Harris, "Hip Hop and Religion And," *Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 5 no. 1 (2018): 151.

<sup>186</sup> Jacquelyn Rahman, "The N Word: Its History and Use in the African American Community," *Journal of English Linguistics* 40, no. 2 (2012): 137-171.

<sup>187</sup> Elina Westinen, "'Still Alive, Nigga': Multi-Semiotic Constructions of Self as Other in Finnish Rap Music Videos," In *Social Media Discourse, (Dis)identifications and Diversities* edited by S. Leppänen, E. Westinen, and S. Kytölä (London: Routledge, 2017) 335-360.

<sup>188</sup> White people have no space to tell Black people about the morality and acceptability of using the N word.



Since Hip Hop is an African diasporic phenomenon and Africans embody memories that connect them to generations of African peoples, African and African diasporic scholars have a unique relationship to Hip Hop. I choose to use Glissant to understand ciphaz and flows and KRS One to identify Hip Hop. Whereas KRS postulates that the “collective consciousness” of Hip Hop gets the closest to what Hip Hop truly is, the translated text of Glissant’s *Poetics of Relations* also uses the term “collective consciousness,” and in one instance, to discuss the quality of relationships.<sup>189</sup> One possibility is that KRS could have read Glissant. Another option, which I am leaning towards, is that they are a part of the “African matrix” that Sterling mentions in describing the ways in which Africans bear memories and ways of being and knowing the world in their bodies.

Paul Gilroy has been heavily referenced in the first and second waves, but I argue that Hip Hop studies should move away from Gilroy. He is most often cited for his notion of the Black Atlantic but several scholars have highlighted the shortcomings of this ideology such as Malawian historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza’s groundbreaking article “Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic” (2005), and Sohail Daulatzai’s article “War at 33 1/3: Hip Hop, the Language of the Unheard, and the Afro-Asian Atlantic,” and Annalisa Oboe and Anna Scacchi’s edited volume *Recharting the Black Atlantic* (2008).<sup>190</sup> All of these scholars agree that Gilroy is too myopic in his scope, both theoretically and geographically. They push for expanding the investigations “between Africa and Europe, between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, across the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, and within the Americas.”<sup>191</sup> Ideologically, they point to similar arguments that Glissant make about Relations and what I am calling flows and ciphaz. Oboe and Scacchi state: “There is a sense of dispersion, caused by the infinite possibilities of such a fluid landscape.”<sup>192</sup> Since I am not advocating for Gilroy, an African diasporic scholar, who do I recommend? In addition to the African and African diasporic scholars I have used in my analysis,<sup>193</sup> the few that I will point out are, John Miller Chernoff, Vincent Harding, John Baugh, Jenny Mbaye, Imani Johnson, Marcyliena Morgan, Sujatha Fernandes and Don C. Ohadike.<sup>194</sup>

### *Performance Theory*

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<sup>189</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 162

<sup>190</sup> Interestingly, Oboe and Scacchi claim about the Black Atlantic is similar to Kubik’s concern about roots: “Locating a black counterculture of modernity in the Atlantic and finding its genealogy in the slave trade, in fact, is complicit with the familiar stereotyping of Africa as the primitive ‘dark continent’” Annalisa Oboe and Anna Scacchi, *Recharting the Black Atlantic: Modern Cultures, Local Communities, Global Connections* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008) 5.

<sup>191</sup> Oboe and Scacchi, *Recharting the Black Atlantic*, 5.

<sup>192</sup> Oboe and Scacchi, *Recharting the Black Atlantic*, 5.

<sup>193</sup> I have only used African and African diasporic scholars in my analysis.

<sup>194</sup> I created this short list of African and African diasporic scholars based on those who research Hip Hop already from a global perspective or have written about African aesthetics.

This shift that I am hoping for in focusing on African and African diasporic scholars aims to move the academic conversation in a different direction. Surprisingly, global Hip Hop studies and Hip Hop studies as a whole has not received enough scholarly attention from a performance studies framework. This lack of attention contributes to the heavy focus on lyrical analysis and the misrepresentation of Hip Hop. Performance studies every aspect of “performing,” how people perform in everyday life, how they perform at the job or in school, how they perform on the stage and, in focusing on Hip Hop, how rappers perform on the track, the variety of performances in music videos, television shows, movies and on stage. For example, from a performance studies perspective, there is a tension between what is “real?” At times, performance allows for full expression of realness and at other times, performances are intentionally staged. Therefore, if the rapper is performing a “staged” performance but academics analyze their lyrics as if they are keeping it real, then they are missing the point of the song that they claim to understand.

In recommending performance studies, it may appear that I am moving away from African and African diasporic scholars. Richard Schechner explicates that the “philosophical antecedents to performance studies” are the philosophies of Plato and his student Aristotle.<sup>195</sup> Samuel T. Livingston, in “Speech is My Hammer, It’s Time to Build: Hip Hop, Cultural Semiosis and the Africana Intellectual Heritage” (2014), reveals “Plato, who pioneered the theory of forms, ideal and manifest, studied at Memphis with the priest Khnuphis and at Heliopolis with Sekhnuphis.”<sup>196</sup> As such, while many of the performance studies scholars are influenced by Plato, they are still learning from Africans. Some of the African diasporic scholars I suggest for using performance studies in examining Hip Hop are E. Patrick Johnson, D. Soyini Madison, Thomas DeFrantz, Anita Gonzalez, and Harvey Young.

### *Truly Global*

My third recommendation for moving global Hip Hop studies to Hip Hop studies with a global view is to not lose sight of the global while examining the local. Due to the influence of glocalization, the desire to ensure that unique local Hip Hop cultures and identities are not lost in the midst of the processes of globalization, I postulate that scholars have focused too heavily on the local at the expense of the global. While this has happened in the observation of regional Hip Hop cultures, moving forward, we can prevent this from happening in the scholarly conversation. My desire for scholars to be aware of the work of other scholars is the reason why I provide the names of scholarly works throughout this article and why we include the bibliography in this special issue.

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<sup>195</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012) 15.

<sup>196</sup> Samuel T. Livingston, “Speech is My Hammer, It’s Time to Build: Hip Hop, Cultural Semiosis and the Africana Intellectual Heritage.” *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2014):41.

I am motivated to publish this bibliography in order to bring the academic Hip Hop studies community together.

By having access to this bibliography, scholars can now quickly reference work in their particular area. While scholars have noted that certain methods and theoretical approaches have not been conducted in research in their particular location, it has been done in other locations. Therefore, Hip Hop scholars who may be examining a region that has had a small amount of scholarship completed in that area can derive tools from other areas that studies have been completed. This can be done not only regionally, but for scholars examining language, gender, sexuality, education and all of the subjects in which Hip Hop scholars are interested in. Moreover, since Hip Hop scholarship is interdisciplinary, Hip Hop scholars can look at other disciplines and acquire new methodological and theoretical approaches. This cross-discipline, cross-fields, methodological, theoretical and globally connected approach to Hip Hop studies will move the field forward.

### Conclusion - From Global Hip Hop Back to Hip Hop

Hip Hop's flows and ciphars from the African interchanges with Asians to diasporic Africans in the favelas in Brazil to Whites in Sydney, Australia, to "Blacks" in Sri Lanka to producers, bgirls, gender non-conforming rappers, queer identified deejays, to Hip Hop cinemas in France, Chican@s on the West Coast, and Blacks in the Global South Relational identity bringing them all together into one network makes it very difficult to proclaim "It's bigger than Hip Hop." The challenge for scholars of Hip Hop studies is to make sense of the vast phenomenon while working along with those in the culture and translating Hip Hop to the academy in the classroom and at conferences. I argue that the best way to understand this multifaceted global entity is to collapse our current subfield of global Hip Hop studies into Hip Hop studies with a global perspective.

The conception of Hip Hop as an African diasporic phenomenon made up of flows and ciphars combined with approach Hip Hop studies globally opens up new possibilities to imagine what Hip Hop could look like in the future. African diasporic scholar Tanya Saunders' research journey in Cuba helps us to begin to envision the full potential of Hip Hop (Studies).<sup>197</sup> Saunders shares her journey in *Cuban Underground Hip Hop: Black Thoughts, Black Revolution, Black Modernity* (2015), a semilongitudinal study of the first generation of the Cuban Underground Hip Hop Movement (CUHHM).<sup>198</sup> She started her research in Cuba as an undergrad in 1998 and was interested in race, gender and

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<sup>197</sup> I place studies in () to say that if we truly reach what Hip Hop studies could be, there is a no separation between the academy and the culture.

<sup>198</sup> Tanya Saunders, *Cuban Underground Hip Hop: Black Thoughts, Black Revolution, Black Modernity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015) 2.

sexuality. She continued her research in Cuba at the graduate level and initially joined the underground Hip Hop community just to socialize. After conducting research in Cuba on race, gender and sexuality for several years, she became frustrated. She attended the University of Michigan and the school required that Saunders had a formal research affiliation in Cuba in order to complete her doctoral work. It was difficult for her to maintain one because “in Cuba if you want to focus on ‘contentious issues’ you have to frame it as a historical project, before 1959, or as a cultural project.”<sup>199</sup> In the midst of her frustration, anxiety about finishing her research project and feeling lost, Cuban scholar and poet Víctor Fowler-Calzada said these few words: “Culture. Focus on culture.”<sup>200</sup> Although it did not click when Fowler-Calzada first said it, when Saunders went to sleep that night:

I woke up in the middle of the night and thought: “Hip hop! The cultural sphere!” I realized that my friends and the circles in which I was roaming all centered around the hip hop movement. Everyone in the movement was talking about the issues that I was interested in, from the artists on the stage to the people who formed the movement’s public. I understood that by focusing on the group Las Krudas CUBENSI and female rappers and MCs such as Magia MC, La Yula, DJ Leydis, and others I could learn about feminism, gender, and sexuality in Cuba. All this time I had been attending underground lesbian parties, hip hop after-parties, concerts, conversations, symposia – I had a wealth of ethnographic data about everyday life in Cuba. Most importantly, I became aware that I had been talking to activists working for social change all along.<sup>201</sup>

While it is not clear how she resolved her research affiliation requirement, what is clear is that Hip Hop had allowed her to study “contentious issues” in a country where she had to be careful of her identity, not be limited to a particular time period and make connections outside of Cuba. Additionally, she examines topics and events such as “feminism, gender, and sexuality” and “underground lesbian parties” that receive scholars have not paid enough attention to.

In her particular situation, Hip Hop appears to be the only field she could analyze in order to understand activism and revolutionary change. If that is true, then that elevates the importance of Hip Hop and propels us into thinking about its potential. One component of Saunders’ story it highlights about Hip Hop and Hip Hop studies is its adaptability and flexibility. None of the barriers, including but not limited to: institutional (Michigan requirements), legal (talking to tourists), governmental (no research post 1959), research interest (feminism, gender, sexuality and activism), temporal (allows her to focus on contemporary issues) or spatial (she is not bound by Cuba), could prevent Hip Hop or the study of it. While studying Hip Hop allows her to overcome these barriers, she had not been able to study race, gender and sexuality

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<sup>199</sup> Her other problem was: “Until approximately 2005 it was illegal for Cubans, specifically Black people, to interact with ‘tourists’” (*Cuban Underground Hip Hop*, 4). She could not cause trouble by talking about tough topics that would bring attention to her.

<sup>200</sup> Saunders, *Cuban Underground Hip Hop*, 4.

<sup>201</sup> Saunders, *Cuban Underground Hip Hop*, 4-5.

because of them. At the same time, this points to the inability of other fields to complete this study such as history.

The government, the University or the topic could not hold Hip Hop or Hip Hop studies down. What then can we imagine Hip Hop studies to do and be? Hip Hop is feminism. Hip Hop studies is cultural studies. Hip Hop is history. Hip Hop studies is the study of race and ethnicity. Hip Hop is queer. Hip Hop studies is the study of the law and business. Hip Hop is hood. Hip Hop studies is linguistics. Hip Hop is education. Hip Hop studies has no boundaries, but it has a framework. Therefore, I proclaim, this flexible, adaptable, boundaryless phenomenon - Hip Hop studies - is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary all at the same time.<sup>202</sup> Hip Hop transcends disciplinary boundaries but still has the ability to be an academic discipline. Moving forward, I challenge all of us, from the classroom to the corner, to tap into our “collective consciousness” and reveal what truly is Hip Hop.

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<sup>202</sup> To see an explanation of each, see <https://medium.com/we-learn-we-grow/what-is-transdisciplinary-13c16eacf57d>.



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<sup>203</sup> I referenced the complete (Global) Hip Hop Studies bibliography throughout this essay. This bibliography is included in the special issue as an individual article. This selected bibliography highlights the works of Africana scholars that can be used in moving the field forward.

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## (Global) Hip Hop Studies Bibliography

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Travis Harris<sup>1</sup>

The primary argument of this special issue is to view Hip Hop from a global perspective and to collapse Global Hip Hop Studies into Hip Hop Studies. As such, the global is in parentheses in the title because global Hip Hop Studies is Hip Hop Studies and should not be separated, yet it is imperative that scholars focus on Hip Hop Studies outside of the United States. This bibliography documents Hip Hop scholarship outside of America, including scholarly works that may be US centric, yet expands its analysis to other parts of the world. Hip Hop Studies outside the boundaries of the United States stretches as far and wide as Hip Hop itself. This scholarship started in 1984, and the amount of scholarship beyond American boundaries has continued to grow up through present day. The first wave, before Mitchell's *Global Noise* (2001), includes a wider range of scholarly works such as conference presentations and books written by journalists, in addition to traditional academic sources such as books and journal articles. I included the variety of scholarly works in the first wave that I do not include in the second wave because the earlier works can function as primary sources and document how the field has grown.

I developed a methodology of researching scholarly sources specifically for this bibliography. I started with the traditional format of scholarly research, searches through institutional libraries (I was a graduate student the College of William & Mary during the majority of this search) and Google Scholar. In order to find articles and books not discoverable through these searches, I then started mining the bibliographies of the works I had found thus far. This was particularly helpful for international sources. As I discovered additional international sources, I noticed a trend in the journals and presses that published Hip Hop. In the middle of this process, I found John Gray's *Hip-Hop Studies: An International Bibliography and Resource Guide* (2016). This massive reference book proved to be a valuable resource. I decided to continue with this bibliography for several reasons. Gray's book focused on Hip Hop inside and outside of America, whereas this bibliography focuses more on scholarly works outside of America. I have sources in this bibliography that Gray does not have and this bibliography continues into 2019. Most

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<sup>1</sup> While I did the majority of the work on this bibliography, I would like to acknowledge and thank those who contributed sources. These scholars are Greg Schick, Mich Nyawalo, Sara Little, Alex Stevenson, Steven Gilbers, Dave Hook, Alex Croke, Mary Fogarty, James Cox, Kendra Salois, Anna Oravcová and Silhouette Bushay.

importantly, this bibliography is being published in the *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*, an open access journal that is more accessible than a book.

The compilation of this bibliography reveals the creativity of Hip Hop scholars who do not have access to these resources and still create scholarly works that contribute to Hip Hop Studies. A weak point of this bibliography are works in specific regional locations. Gray's work helped with this, but I am sure that there is still more to uncover. For example, this bibliography includes a plethora of sources on Hip Hop in France but other parts of Europe do not have the same number of sources. Therefore, moving forward, my hope is that this bibliography will be a starting point where locations that have scholarly works missing can contribute and the Hip Hop Studies scholarly community can contribute to this bibliography beyond 2019.

## First Wave

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

#### No. 4: Watching the World

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

I walk the Earth with dizzy feet,  
Back from yonder, up from the grave,  
And with each step I see deceit  
And how their change is still a knave.

**Chorus:** Watching the world, what do I see?  
Such ills that break the heart in me.  
Some things that've happened since I left  
Have left our planet more bereft.

} *To be sung,  
the other  
stanzas rapped*

How things have worsened! And it stuns  
That anyone would think it's cool:  
Even some babies got their guns  
To shoot at babies gone to school.

*Repeat chorus.*

And now gun-murder goes to church  
To maim and kill for the god of race.  
How long will some nation bear to lurch  
Ahead in such disgrace?

*Repeat chorus.*

I pace the Earth with dizzy eyes,  
Up from yonder, back from the grave,  
And I see with no surprise:  
Their change is not the type I crave.



*Repeat chorus.*

The march by some to prove they matter,  
That their lives is not some gutter  
In which others can blow their noses,  
Their legs apart in prideful poses.

*Repeat chorus.*

The Earth still sizzles for unconcern;  
Thank those who lead before they learn.  
Drunk with power, besotted with wealth,  
They care less for our planet's health.

*Repeat chorus.*

And when, I ask, shall it become  
A change that's real and meant to last,  
And not change in its present form  
That mocks change and apes the past?

*Repeat chorus.*

February 14, 2017

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## Reclaiming Our Subjugated Truths – Using Hip Hop as a Form of Decolonizing Public Pedagogy: The Case of Didier Awadi

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Joanna Daguirane Da Sylva

### Abstract

This paper explores how Senegalese Hip Hop pioneer, Didier Awadi, uses Hip Hop as a form of decolonizing public pedagogy that renders the contributions of Pan-African leaders *visible* to Africa and the world, contributions that are often omitted and vilified by mainstream history. I argue that Awadi's work provides a strategy for *reclaiming* oral literature, particularly *storytelling*, as a legitimate way of knowing, teaching and learning history. In his album *Présidents d'Afrique*, Didier Awadi uses rap and traditional African music to *retell* the story of our resistant past through an African frame of reference. The data is comprised of (1) a one-on-one interview with Didier Awadi and (2) one song of *Présidents d'Afrique* that best exemplifies how his storytelling narrates notions of African histories often erased in Eurocentric history. The data is analyzed using Ruth Reviere's five Afrocentric research criteria: "*ukweli* (truth), *ujamaa* (community), *kujitoa* (commitment), *uhaki* (justice), and *utulivu* (harmony)" to determine whether Didier Awadi's stories are grounded in African knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Reviere, "Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology," *Journal of Black Studies* 31, no. 6 (2001): 709-728.

## Introduction

In 2010, to mark fifty years of African independence, Didier Awadi, a world-renowned Senegalese rapper, political activist and producer, released his much-anticipated album *Présidents d'Afrique*. Awadi dedicated this five-year project to the “founding fathers of black consciousness” and the great Pan-African advocates who fought for the creation of a new, respected and united Africa.<sup>2</sup> Awadi created a timeless educational project by weaving together the speeches of leaders like Thomas Sankara, Patrice Lumumba, Cheikh Anta Diop, Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and Norbert Zongo, while rapping in collaboration with other conscious African and African American artists. The end result is a pedagogical project and musical piece of art that educates, inspires and promotes African knowledge and African history through storytelling. This paper focuses on unveiling subjugated African histories and truths that have been suppressed and ignored by Eurocentric and colonial forces. I am therefore using the *voices* of African-descended people to contribute to the inclusion of Indigenous, especially African, knowledges in the recounting of human history.

The objective of this paper is to examine how Hip Hop music has been used in Senegal by Didier Awadi to publicly educate African youth about African histories and current sociopolitical realities and to encourage political activism. I examine how *Présidents d'Afrique* seeks to reveal the “missing chapters” of Africa’s resistant past with the goal of redressing the narrative that portrays Africa as weak, backwards, and lacking history.<sup>3</sup> Awadi challenges and resists selective Eurocentric remembering of historical events, presented to students in Senegalese formal schools as history.

Awadi’s revolutionary work transforms our understanding of Hip Hop and the ways in which Hip Hop artists utilize their platform to educate those left out of or conditioned by formal schooling. Awadi’s work highlights African histories that have been omitted by the formal education system in Senegal and other parts of Africa as a result of colonialism and neocolonialism. In light of his work, this paper seeks to answer the following question: What are the ways in which Awadi is able to further our understanding of Hip Hop pedagogical approaches and elucidate empowering African histories? I argue that Awadi seeks to reveal, reclaim, and restore subjugated African knowledges and histories through *Présidents d'Afrique*, which privileges oral literature.

To answer this research question, I first introduce and define Pan-Africanism, the perspective from which I am approaching this research. More than an ideology, Pan-

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<sup>2</sup> Didier Awadi, *Présidents d'Afrique* (France Sony/ATV Music Publishing, 2010), CD. Excerpts can be heard on *SoundCloud* as part of the documentary *United States of Africa* (directed by Yanick Létourneau, 2012) at <https://soundcloud.com/united-states-of-africa/the-roots-didier-awadi-pr>.

<sup>3</sup> Bagele Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2011), 156.

Africanism is a way of seeing and understanding the world that resists the Eurocentric perspective that controls mainstream academia. As a result, throughout my paper I often speak of *Africa*, understood as the embodiment of African unity that rejects the artificial borders created by colonial powers. Second, I examine the existing scholarship on the intrinsic relationship between music and political activism, and more precisely, Hip Hop music and political activism. Following that, I present a brief history of the Hip Hop movement in Senegal and introduce Didier Awadi. Fourth, I explain how *storytelling* informs the actions I take to investigate the research and I position Didier Awadi as a *storyteller*. I then provide the data sources of this research and explain how I analyze the findings using Ruth Reviere's five research criteria, *ukweli* (truth), *ujamaa* (community), *kujitoa* (commitment), *uhaki* (justice), and *utulivu* (harmony).<sup>4</sup> Lastly, I present my findings and argue that the intersection of storytelling and public pedagogy can advance global Hip Hop scholarship. This project seeks to contribute to African pedagogy and places African ways of knowing and doing at the center of education. This means learning and teaching from African traditions, including oral literature, that have been used to educate Africans for centuries.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that grounds this paper is Pan-Africanism, an ideology and movement that seeks to unify and uplift Africans and people of African descent by recognizing their shared experiences of oppression, dispossession, discrimination and racism over centuries. Pan-Africanism was born, in action and social thought, as a reaction to slavery, Western colonialism, and the continuous mistreatment of Black and Brown people throughout the world. There is a consensus among scholars and theorists that Pan-Africanism can be broadly defined as "the acceptance of oneness of all African people and a commitment for the betterment of all people of African descent."<sup>5</sup> It is from this perspective that I am approaching this study.

I examine Awadi's work from a Pan-African lens rather than the internalized European one that has colonized mainstream academia for centuries. This paper resists academic colonization and the Eurocentric perspective that limits the way we view and understand the world. As a result, I use Pan-African scholars and sources that highlight African-descended people's voices and perspectives to analyze Awadi's work. I look at the way the world and African-descended people in the world are positioned, and I seek to value and elevate their perspective by using a Pan-African perspective. Didier Awadi

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<sup>4</sup> Reviere, "Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology," 709-728.

<sup>5</sup> W. Ofuatye-Kodjoe, *Pan-Africanism: New Directions in Strategy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986), 368.

identifies himself as a Pan-Africanist and a *Sankarist*<sup>6</sup> and his music transcends the hopes, actions, and ideas of Pan-Africanism.<sup>7</sup>

Africa is the cradle of humanity and has some of the world's richest histories. According to Cheikh Anta Diop, a leading anthropologist and Egyptologist, humankind was born in Africa on the latitude of Kenya, in the region that comprises Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania, and extends all the way down to South Africa.<sup>8</sup> He states: "It is clear that any humanity that had its birth in that sub-equatorial region could not have survived without pigmentation. Nature doesn't do anything by chance and any humanity born in that region was given melanin to protect its skin."<sup>9</sup> That is the reason why we can assert that the first human being had to be black. This historical fact disturbs the Eurocentric narrative that places European-descended people at the center of history. Diop argues that African history has been falsified and erased by dominant history, a crime perpetrated by Western historians for hundreds of years to continue exploiting the continent, its resources, its soil, and its people to maintain white supremacy and the status quo.<sup>10</sup>

The education system in Senegal has been Europeanized as a result of colonialism. In Senegal, "officials consistently depended on schools to spread the French language and affinity for France among the populace and to facilitate and justify colonial rule."<sup>11</sup> As a result, postcolonial Senegalese schools do not teach about African histories, but focus on the Eurocentric understanding and construction of history established by their Western colonizers. This phenomenon is not confined to Senegal but is present in the rest of formerly colonized Africa and the African diaspora. According to Shizha, "In many African schools, European education continues to distort, misappropriate, and misrepresent African realities, their lives, experiences, and thoughts."<sup>12</sup> In Africa, colonial schooling continues to silence and alienate Indigenous voices and realities. This racist education system perpetuates psychological colonization by discrediting and

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<sup>6</sup> People who politically align with the Pan-Africanist vision, work, and party of former president Thomas Sankara.

<sup>7</sup> Awadi, *Présidents d'Afrique*; Didier Awadi, *Ma Révolution* (Studio Sankara, 2012), CD; *The United States of Africa*, DVD, directed by Yanick Létourneau (Peripheria Productions & National Film Board of Canada, 2012).

<sup>8</sup> Cheikh Anta Diop, "Origine de L'Humanité et Phenotype des Ancients Egyptiens," YouTube video, 58:38, posted by "Nzwamba," April 29, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lz3O--TGQ9g>.

<sup>9</sup> Diop, "Origine de l'humanité."

<sup>10</sup> Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill & Company, 1974).

<sup>11</sup> Kelly M. Duke Bryant, *Education as Politics: Colonial Schooling and Political Debate in Senegal, 1850s-1914* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Edward Shiza, "Reclaiming Our Memories: The Education Dilemma in Postcolonial African School Curricula," in *Issues in African Education: Sociological Perspectives*, ed. Ali A. Abdi and Ailie Cleghorn (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 71.

disengaging African cultures, knowledges, histories and languages.<sup>13</sup> Shizha argues, “the aim of colonial education was to leave those who were colonized with a lack of identity and a limited sense of their past.”<sup>14</sup> The Eurocentric understanding of what *history* is has dominated academia and formal schooling in Africa, and through this domination, there was no other history.

Africa according to Eurocentric colonial notions was not seen as having history but comprising only a state of nature. According to German Philosopher G.W.F Hegel: “At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit.”<sup>15</sup> Many scholars, like Hegel, proclaimed that Africa had no history. Fuglestad states,

Back in the early 1960s the distinguished Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper of Oxford University proclaimed, as every Africanist probably knows, that at least precolonial Black Africa had no history. He must have meant what he said, for he repeated his contention in 1969 by putting the label “unhistoric” on the African continent.<sup>16</sup>

Although Africa was considered “unhistoric,” Egypt was singled out by European historians and treated as its own entity, completely separated from the African continent. Hegel notes, “Egypt; which was adapted to become a mighty centre of independent civilization, and therefore is as isolated and singular in Africa as Africa itself appears in relation to the other parts of the world.”<sup>17</sup> Egyptian civilization, which has captured the attention of scholars because of their monumental architectures, hieroglyphs, religion, social, and political order, is the only part of African history mentioned in mainstream education. It is imperative to recognize, however, that “scholars have attempted to negate the ancient Egyptians’ African identity by stating either that race does not exist or that the Egyptians are a race of their own.”<sup>18</sup> Scholars claiming that race does not exist are in fact correct, as *race* is a social construct. Race, however, has played a pivotal role in hierarchically classifying people and in giving authority to the dominant colonizer to define and legitimize historical knowledge.

Denying the power of *race* is ignoring the reality of African descended peoples’ oppression. According to Diop: “The birth of Egyptology was thus marked by the need to destroy the memory of a Negro Egypt at all cost.”<sup>19</sup> Scholars have actively sought to

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<sup>13</sup> Shiza, “Reclaiming Our Memories,” 71.

<sup>14</sup> Shiza, “Reclaiming Our Memories,” 71.

<sup>15</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Willey Book Company, 1900), 99.

<sup>16</sup> Finn Fuglestad, “The Trevor-Roper Trap of the Imperialism of History: An Essay,” *History in Africa* 19 (1992): 309.

<sup>17</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 92.

<sup>18</sup> Troy D. Allen, “Cheikh Anta Diop’s Two Cradle Theory: Revisited,” *Journal of Black Studies* 38 (2008): 813.

<sup>19</sup> Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization*, 51.



separate Egyptian civilization from other African civilizations identified as Black, regardless of the fact that Egypt is part of the African continent. Citing Immanuel Wallerstein, Diop argues that “if the ancient Egyptians were Negroes, then European civilization is but a derivation of African achievement.”<sup>20</sup> In other words, Africans are at the center of human civilization and its development, and this truth contradicts the dominant narrative that accredits Western, European descendants for almost the entire world’s historical, scientific, economic, and sociopolitical discoveries. Admitting that a Black Egyptian civilization laid the foundation for world civilization disturbs the Western narrative that places peoples of European descent at the heart of history.

### Music and Political Activism: An Intrinsic Relationship

History reveals that music has played a powerful role in political activism. According to Robert J. Branham and Stephen J. Hartnett, “words and melody and harmony and rhythm merge to form shimmering patterns of sound that float across the air, carrying political words that ‘would be death to speak’ in the form of musical messages.”<sup>21</sup> For centuries, political activists have created and utilized music to express their political situations with the goal of, directly or indirectly, contributing to social justice. A. O. Scott states, “From ‘The Marseillaise’ to ‘We Shall Overcome,’ there has probably never been a revolution that did not use songs to give voice to its aspirations or rally the morale of its adherents.”<sup>22</sup> Music has been intrinsically linked to protest movements seeking to end systems of oppression, including but not limited to slavery, colonialism, apartheid, and segregation.<sup>23</sup> Communities and individuals across the world

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<sup>20</sup> Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization*, p. iii.

<sup>21</sup> Robert J. Branham and Stephen J. Hartnett, *Sweet Freedom’s Song: “My Country ‘tis of Thee” and Democracy in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

<sup>22</sup> A. O. Scott, “Film Review: The Sounds and Rhythms that Helped Bring Down Apartheid: *Amandla! A Revolution in Four Part Harmony*,” *New York Times*, accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/19/movies/film-review-the-sounds-and-rhythms-that-helped-bring-down-apartheid.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Luqman M. Abdullah, “The Sounds of Liberation: Resistance, Cultural Retention, and Progressive Traditions for Social Justice in African American Music” (MA Thesis, Cornell University, 2009); Robert Darden, *Nothing but Love in God’s Water: Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2014); Serge R. Denisoff, *Sing a Song of Social Significance* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1983); Ethan Goffman, “From the Blues to Hip Hop: How African American Music Changed U.S. Culture and Moved the World,” *ProQuest*, accessed November 5, 2015, <http://www.laguitarra-blog.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/from-the-blues-to-hip-hop.pdf>; Anne-Marie Gray, “Liberation Songs Sung by Black South Africans During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” *International Journal of Music Education* 33 (1999): 30-37; *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony*, directed by Lee Hirsch, Desireé Markgraaff, Sherry Simpson Dean, et al, Santa Monica, CA: Artisan Home Entertainment, 2003, Documentary Film; Andra le Roux-Kemp, “Struggle Music: South African Politics in Song,” *Law and Humanities* 8 (2014): 247-268; Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Kesha M. Morant, “Language in Action: Funk Music as the Critical Voice of the Postcivil Rights Movement Counterculture,” *Journal of Black Studies* 42 (2011): 71-82; Troy Murphy, “Rhetorical Invention and the Transformation of ‘We Shall

have utilized music as an agent for change and as a tool for resistance and liberation, particularly people of African descent.<sup>24</sup>

Many scholars argue that music has been a vital part of African life.<sup>25</sup> According to Celestine C. Mbaegbu: "Various African writers have highlighted this aspect of the cultural life of the Africans by saying that music has rooted itself in African culture so much so that it has become part and parcel of their everyday life."<sup>26</sup> Africans have used music as a form of communication, education, and knowledge transmission that privileges African oral traditions. Lara Allen asserts that in Africa, "communication remains aural and oral as opposed to specular and written," as in the Western world.<sup>27</sup> For centuries, Africans have used oral traditions to educate their children and make sense of the world. According to scholar Patience Elabor-Idemudia, "[o]ral forms of knowledge, such as ritualistic chants, riddles, songs, folktales, and parables, not only articulate a distinct cultural identity but also give voice to a range of cultural, social and political, aesthetic, and linguistic systems—long muted by centuries of colonialism and cultural imperialism."<sup>28</sup> Imperialism imposed Western values and epistemology in education and all aspects of African life, legitimizing the authority of written text over oral literature. As a result, African cultures and oral traditions, considered backward and "primitive," were vilified and degraded with the goal of colonizing, not only African lands, but also African minds.

An increasing number of scholars are researching the important role of popular music as a medium for thinking through politics in Africa.<sup>29</sup> Allen states, "[m]usic

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Overcome," *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication* 4 (2003): 1-8; Mary Turck, *Freedom Song: Young Voices and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Abdullah, "The Sounds of Liberation;" Lara Allen, "Music and Politics in Africa," *Social Dynamics* 30 (2004): 1-19; Robert Darden, *Nothing but Love in God's Water: Black Sacred Music from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 2014); Gray, "Liberation songs sung by black South Africans;" Michael S. Hanson, "People Get Ready: Race, Place and Political Identity in Post-Civil Rights Black Popular Music, 1965-1975" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2002); Morant, "Language in Action."

<sup>25</sup> Abdullah, "The Sounds of Liberation;" Allen, "Music and Politics in Africa"; Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (London: Penguin, 1978); Darden, *Nothing but Love in God's Water*; Celestine C. Mbaegbu, "The Effective Power of Music in Africa," *Journal of Philosophy* 5 (2015): 176-183; Turck, *Freedom Song*.

<sup>26</sup> Mbaegbu, "The Effective Power of Music in Africa," 177.

<sup>27</sup> Allen, "Music and Politics in Africa," 2.

<sup>28</sup> Patience Elabor-Idemudia, "Participatory Research: A Tool in the Production of Knowledge in Development Discourse," in *Feminist Post-Development Thought: Rethinking Modernity, Postcolonialism, and Representation*, ed. Kriemild Saunders (London: Zed Books, 2002), 103.

<sup>29</sup> Allen, "Music and Politics in Africa;" Eric Charry S., *African Expressive Cultures: Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012); Graeme Counsel, "Popular Music and Politics in Sékou Touré's Guinea," *Australian Review of African Studies* 26 (2004): 26-42; *African Underground: Hip Hop in Senegal*, DVD, directed by Magee McIlvaine, Chris Moore, Ben Herson, and Howard Wolpe (New York: Nomadic Wax/Sol Production, 2008); Anne Schumann, "Popular Music and Political Change in Côte d'Ivoire: The Divergent Dynamics of zouglou and Reggae," *Journal of African Media*

functions as a trenchant political site in Africa because it is the most widely appreciated art form on the continent.”<sup>30</sup> In many African countries, people engage with their political circumstances through music. Musicians creating political music use everyday life experiences to challenge dominant ideologies and power structures. Mbaegbu states, “[o]ften times African music re-echoes the state of injustice done to any oppressed section of the Africans, either by the white man or by some wretched and dictatorial African leaders.”<sup>31</sup> Hip Hop music in Africa is no exception.

Hip Hop has become a political force that emerged as a tool of *resistance* to the status quo and to authority.<sup>32</sup> According to Dr. Todd Boyd, also known as Notorious PhD, “[h]ip-hop is inherently political, the language is political. It uses language as a weapon — not a weapon to violate or not a weapon to offend, but a weapon that pushes the envelope that provokes people, makes people think.”<sup>33</sup> Hip Hop has become a global phenomenon where groups of marginalized youth have adopted and adapted Hip Hop according to their realities and cultures.<sup>34</sup> According to Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett, “[a]s hip-hop’s cultural beliefs became more widely understood, global hip-hop began to take on a character of its own, reflecting the culture, creativity, and local styles of the youth who embraced and produced it.”<sup>35</sup> Like other social and political movements, Hip Hop was propelled by dynamic youth with the goal of provoking societal change.

Hip Hop gives a legitimate space to voices that have often been disregarded, ignored, and omitted. Jeff Chang states, “[a]lthough hip-hop is mainstream in many places today, it is still considered a voice for the oppressed.”<sup>36</sup> Young people across the world use Hip Hop as a tool for self-expression in order to question and critique conventional aspects of society while promoting political activism with the goal of transforming and contributing to a better and more just society.<sup>37</sup> Charity Marsh and

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*Studies* 1 (2009): 117–133, accessed November 5, 2015, doi: 10.1386/jams.1.1.117/1; Christopher A. Waterman, *Jùjú: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

<sup>30</sup> Allen, “Music and Politics in Africa,” 1.

<sup>31</sup> Mbaegbu, “The Effective Power of Music in Africa,” 181.

<sup>32</sup> Jeff Chang, “It’s a Hip Hop World,” *Foreign Policy* 163 (2007): 58–65.

<sup>33</sup> Scott Simon, “Hip Hop: Today’s Civil Rights Movement?,” *NPR*, March 1, 2003, accessed October 2, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1178621>.

<sup>34</sup> Charry, *Hip Hop Africa*; Chang, “It’s a Hip Hop World;” Marcyliena Morgan and Dionne Bennett, “Hip-Hop and the Global Imprint of a Black Cultural Form,” *Daedalus* 140 (2011): 176–196, accessed September 20, 2015, doi:10.1162/DAED\_a\_00086; Paul Khalil Saucier, ed., *Native Tongues: The African Hip Hop Reader* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> Morgan and Bennett, “Hip-hop and the Global Imprint,” 141.

<sup>36</sup> Chang, “It’s a Hip-Hop World,” 62.

<sup>37</sup> Chang, “It’s a Hip-Hop World”; Msia K. Clark, “Hip Hop as Social Commentary in Accra and Dar Es Salaam,” *African Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (2012): 23–46; Rosalind Fredericks, “‘The Old Man is Dead’: Hip Hop and the Arts of Citizenship of Senegalese Youth,” *Antipode* 46, no. 1 (2014): 130–148; Charity Marsh and Sheila Petty, “Globalization, Identity, and Youth Resistance: Kenya’s Hip Hop Parliament,”

Sheila Petty argue, “[h]ip-hop continues to be a constructive and contested space in which marginalized young people around the world ‘both resist and challenge social ideologies, practices, and structures that have caused and maintained their subordinate position.’”<sup>38</sup> Hip Hop is a form of rejection of colonial structures. While the culture has spread all over the world, Hip Hop has recently become one of the most important musical and cultural movements in Africa.<sup>39</sup>

### Hip Hop in Senegal

Hip Hop music surfaced in Senegal in the 1980s with the emergence of Positive Black Soul (PBS), the first African rap group to gain international success, of which Didier Awadi was part. When Hip Hop first appeared in Senegal, it took form with a strong Western and American influence.<sup>40</sup> This changed when many Senegalese Hip Hop artists—including Didier Awadi, Duggy Tee, Xuman & Pee Froiss, Ndongo D, Daara J, Djiby Daddy, Bakhaw, Da Brains, P-Blow & Jah, Tigrim-Bi, etc.—realized that they had a responsibility to respect and represent Senegalese and African cultures by addressing Senegalese realities and staying away from commercial Hip Hop glorifying gangster life.<sup>41</sup> Rapper Xuman states, “[i]n our culture, we must be conscious, we must think about the future.”<sup>42</sup> According to Greg Thomas, “[a]rtists such as Daara J, Fou Malade, and Dakar All-Stars, along with Awadi and Radical, make music that mesmerizes, aesthetically and politically, voicing genius, opposition, and pleasure in black resistance to neocolonial and economic injustice.”<sup>43</sup> The authenticity of Senegalese Hip Hop has become measured by the commitment demonstrated to political activism. Furthermore, Hip Hop artists anchor themselves in their African identity by using African traditions, languages, religions, values, and knowledges to, as Didier Awadi states, “express what is deeply in their heart and to fight for noble objectives.”<sup>44</sup>

Hip Hop exploded onto the Senegalese music scene in the following decade. In the 1990s, the environment created by unfavorable socio-economic circumstances, unemployment growth, acute economic crisis, political stagnation, and the crisis of the

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MUSICcultures 38, (2011): 132–143; Craig S. Watkins, *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement* (Boston; Westminster: Beacon Press, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> Marsh and Petty, “Globalization, Identity, and Youth Resistance,” 135.

<sup>39</sup> Clark, “Hip Hop as Social Commentary,” 23.

<sup>40</sup> Magee McIlvaine, Chris Moore, Ben Herson, and Howard Wolpe, dir. *African Underground: Hip Hop in Senegal* (New York: Nomadic Wax/Sol Production, 2008), DVD.

<sup>41</sup> McIlvaine et al., *African Underground*.

<sup>42</sup> Appearing in McIlvaine et al., *African Underground*.

<sup>43</sup> Greg Thomas, “Conclusion: Hip-hop Pan-Africanism,” in *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Cultures, Volumes 1–3*, ed. Carole Boyce Davies (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 536.

<sup>44</sup> McIlvaine et al., *African Underground: Hip Hop in Senegal*.

education system, was the perfect climate for the birth of Hip Hop music in Senegal.<sup>45</sup> Hip Hop provided young artists with a platform to passionately express their frustrations and desire for change. As a result, artists soon recognized rapping as a form of expression that could educate people with the goal of creating meaningful change in Senegalese society.<sup>46</sup>

### Didier Awadi: A Hip Hop Artist with a Political Message

Didier Awadi was born on August 11, 1969, in Dakar, Senegal. According to Radio France Internationale (RFI), “Didier shared his father’s passion for music, but in the early ‘80s, the young teenager was drawn to a totally different sound: rap.”<sup>47</sup> Inspired by American Hip Hop artists, including Grandmaster Flash and Public Enemy, Didier Awadi formed his first Hip Hop group in 1984, Syndicate. It was in 1989, however, that Didier Awadi and his friend Doug E. Tee founded PBS. As the first Hip Hop group in Senegal, PBS struggled to get their new genre of music heard and be respected by elders, who thought they were trying to be American.<sup>48</sup> “When we started to rap in our own language and talk about what was going on in our country” states Awadi, “their visions of what we were doing changed, and people listened, not just the youths, but also the elders.”<sup>49</sup> PBS’s politically engaged lyrics and beats spoke to the Senegalese population because the group addressed important issues of poverty, corruption, and education, realities experienced by the Senegalese people, especially the youth.

After seven albums and thirteen years of collaboration and music tours, Didier Awadi started his solo career in 2001 with his first album *Parole d'honneur*, without ever officially bringing PBS to an end.<sup>50</sup> Radio France Internationale states, “[r]ight from the start of his career, Awadi used his rap as a vehicle for his protest message, raising his voice in support of the anti-globalization cause.”<sup>51</sup> For the fiftieth anniversary of African independence, Awadi released his much anticipated album *Présidents d’Afrique*, which resulted in a documentary entitled *The United States of Africa*, produced by Yanick

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<sup>45</sup> See for instance *100% Galsen: A Hip Hop Documentary Made in Senegal*, directed by the pioneering Senegalese rapper Keyti (Cheikh Sene) and filmed entirely by Senegalese crews. It is part of a transnational African collaborative project called Redefinition: African Hip Hop.

<sup>46</sup> Ania J. M. A. Bassene, “Hip Hop and Politics in Dakar, Senegal,” (MA thesis, Howard University, 2013); Charry, *Hip Hop Africa*; Fredericks, “‘The Old Man is Dead;’” Elena Oumano, “Words and Deeds: Senegal’s PBS Forges African Hip-Hop,” *Billboard*, September 4, 1999, 30–31; *100% Galsen: A Hip Hop Documentary Made in Senegal*, directed by Keyti (Cheikh Sene), Senegal: Africanhiphop.com and Optimiste Produktion, 2012, documentary film.

<sup>47</sup> Radio France Internationale (rfi), “Didier Awadi,” *RFI Music*, accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.rfimusic.com/artist/rap/didierawadi/biography>.

<sup>48</sup> Oumano, *Senegal’s PBS*, 30.

<sup>49</sup> Oumano, *Senegal’s PBS*, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Radio France Internationale, “Didier Awadi.”

<sup>51</sup> Radio France Internationale, “Didier Awadi.”



Létourneau, which facilitated important discussions with organizations like UNESCO concerning the issues of learning and teaching African history. <sup>52</sup>

*Présidents d'Afrique* repositions important Pan-Africanists, including Nkrumah, Sankara, Malcolm X, Zongo, Mandela, Lumumba, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Diop, Aimé Césaire, and Samora Machel, since they, along with their meaningful messages, have been erased, and some assassinated, from history with the support of Western powers. This repositioning is crucial in reclaiming an African identity and dignity. In *Présidents d'Afrique*, Awadi chooses to include the speeches of diasporic influential leaders, like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. As a Pan-Africanist, Awadi believes that their messages and legacies not only impacted African Americans but also globally influenced African and Afrodiasporic communities. Michael Onyebuchi Eze argues, the “stories and historical events that we memorialize as people of African origins share equal constitutive character worthy of pan-African status insofar as they offer a contemporaneous historical memory for African peoples.” <sup>53</sup> Historical events and stories that speak for and to Black and Brown experiences can be powerful for the recognition and the fight of all people of African descent, who share a similar history of dispossession, oppression, and racism.

### Storytelling as Methodology

This paper argues that storytelling is a valid form of knowledge that delves into the lived experiences of people to make sense of the world. Storytelling, as part of oral literature, has always been part of African cultures. According to Bagele Chilisa, “[s]tories are central to the lives of the colonized Other. They have been used to collect, deposit, analyze, store, and disseminate information and as instruments of socialization.” <sup>54</sup> This conveying of events in words, sounds, and images has created the historical narrative of most oral societies. Jan Vansina states, “[n]o one in oral societies doubts that memories can be faithful repositories which contain the sum total of past human experience and explain the how and why of present conditions.” <sup>55</sup> In short, storytelling is history.

Oral literature and storytelling “provide some of the missing chapters on the histories and experiences” of historically oppressed African descended peoples. <sup>56</sup> Vansina observes, however, that members of the hegemonic Euro-Western, “literate societies find it difficult to shed the prejudice of contempt for the spoken word, the

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<sup>52</sup> Yanick Létourneau, *The United States of Africa*, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Onyebuchi Eze, “Pan-Africanism and the Politics of History,” *History Compass* 11, no. 9 (2013): 678.

<sup>54</sup> Bagele Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2012), 138.

<sup>55</sup> Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), xi.

<sup>56</sup> Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, 156.



counterpart of pride in writing and respect for the written word.”<sup>57</sup> Written history, however, has been given the authority to tell the stories of *all* societies through the eyes of the victorious colonizer. Reviere states, “Eurocentrics have continuously assumed the right to tell their own stories and everyone else’s – and from a solely one-dimensional perspective.”<sup>58</sup> This one-dimensional colonial perspective of history, however, is the one that students learn in formal schooling in Senegal, and in the rest of formerly colonized Africa. Schooling is directly related to the maintenance of written and colonial knowledge. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “[w]e have often allowed our ‘histories’ to be told and have then become outsiders as we heard them being told. Schooling is directly implicated in this process.”<sup>59</sup> This essay seeks to privilege *education*, understood as a social and community-based pedagogy, over *schooling*, defined as colonial conditioning. Furthermore, this article legitimizes oral literature as a valid form of knowledge and attempts to tell part of Africa’s story through the African eye, mind, and heart.

### Didier Awadi as Storyteller

Didier Awadi is a rapper and I am arguing that rapping and singing are forms of storytelling. Being a rapper is a way of telling a story. While some scholars have contested the connection between *griots* and rappers, who have been referred to as *modern griots*, I believe that something needs to be said about the *essence* of *griotism* and rapping – telling stories through music.<sup>60</sup> Chilisa argues, “[s]ongs, dance, and poems are an integral part of the oral literature that communicates historical information on events, public experience, and practice, especially experiences of the formerly colonized.”<sup>61</sup> Awadi’s songs should not be merely looked at as musical pieces, but a form of storytelling that carries important messages of history and hope.

Awadi’s music provides some of the missing chapters of the history of the colonized African. According to Chilisa, “[t]here are countless missing chapters on what the world needs to know about the postcolonial and indigenous people’s histories and their resistance to colonizing ideologies of the former colonizers.”<sup>62</sup> Awadi’s songs share

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<sup>57</sup> Jan Vansina, “Once Upon a Time: Oral Traditions as History in Africa,” *Daedalus* 100, no. 2 (1971): 442.

<sup>58</sup> Reviere, “Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology,” 717.

<sup>59</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (New York: Zed Books, 1999), 33.

<sup>60</sup> A *Griot*, also known as *Jeli*, *Jali* or *Gewel*, is a hereditary West African poet, storyteller, and historian who preserves African oral history through music. For discussion of a continuity between *griot* tradition and contemporary rap, see Damon Sajani, “Troubling the Trope of ‘Rapper as Modern Griot,’” *Journal of Pan African Studies* 6, no. 3 (2013): 156–180; and Patricia Tang, “The Rapper as Modern Griot: Reclaiming Ancient Traditions,” in *African Expressive Cultures: Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in a Globalizing World*, ed. Eric Charry (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012) 79–91.

<sup>61</sup> Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, 145.

<sup>62</sup> Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, 146.

the stories of Africans who resisted colonial actions and principles, a chapter of history that has been erased by the dominant historical narrative.

### Data and Analysis

I had the honor and privilege of conducting a face-to-face interview with Didier Awadi. The interview was audio-recorded and conducted in French, as Awadi grew up speaking French, the national and colonial language of Senegal. My data sources are:

- a) One-on-one interview with Didier Awadi; and
- b) One track of *Présidents d'Afrique*, namely, "Oser inventer l'avenir."

I chose this specific track because it best exemplifies how Awadi's storytelling narrates notions of African histories ignored in Eurocentric and dominant notions of history. Furthermore, this track demonstrates how Awadi connects the past to the present to create *history* that aligns with African notions of history.

I evaluate the findings of my research by using Reviere's five research criteria, which are based on the African principles of *Ma'at* and *Nommo*.<sup>63</sup> In ancient Egyptian religion, *Ma'at* was "the personification of truth and the cosmic order."<sup>64</sup> *Nommo* means "the productive word"<sup>65</sup> and "describes the creation of knowledge as a vehicle for improvement in human relations."<sup>66</sup> Molefi Kete Asante uses and expands on these notions to demonstrate the ways in which African concepts can inform the foundation of knowledge.<sup>67</sup> While using Reviere's five research criteria, I was informed by a professor at the University of British Columbia, a Kiswahili native speaker, that some terms were incorrectly translated. According to the *Swahili-English Dictionary* and Donovan McGrath and Lutz Marten's course for beginners in Swahili, the definitions of the principles *utulivu* and *uhaki* have been reversed and mistranslated.<sup>68</sup> As a result, I use the definitions provided by the *Swahili-English Dictionary*.<sup>69</sup> The five Afrocentric criteria are

- Ukweli: defined as the groundedness of research and the concept of truth. According to Chilisa, *ukweli* "requires researchers to establish whether the

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<sup>63</sup> Reviere, "Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology."

<sup>64</sup> Wendy Doniger, "Ma'at," in *The Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions* (Singapore: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2006), 674.

<sup>65</sup> Molefi Kete Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 88.

<sup>66</sup> Reviere, "Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology," 711.

<sup>67</sup> Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Charles W. Rechenbach, *Swahili-English Dictionary* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 1968); and Donovan McGrath and Lutz Marten, *Colloquial Swahili: The Complete Course for Beginners* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>69</sup> Rechenbach, *Swahili-English Dictionary*.

conclusions reached are representative of only their own position or whether they represent a consensus of the researched and other opinions.”<sup>70</sup>

- Ujamaa: calls for the recognition and maintenance of the community.<sup>71</sup>
- Kujitoa: emphasizes the need for the researcher to recognize how “knowledge is structured and used over the need for dispassion and objectivity.”<sup>72</sup>
- Utulivu: “requires a research procedure that is fair to all participants.”<sup>73</sup>
- Uhaki: the concept of justice required for legitimate research.<sup>74</sup>

These meaningful criteria of research evaluation serve as counterpoints to the Eurocentric notions of objectivity, validity, and reliability that ground the authenticity of analysis within the Afrocentric epistemic framework. I will examine both the stories told in Awadi’s songs—by analyzing the themes, lyrics, and emotions awakened through the combination of oral literature, rap, and music—and his one-on-one interview.

In order to produce a *truthful* paper that unveils the injustices experienced by African communities, I need to explicitly state that my background, values, perspectives, race, lived experiences, and knowledge affect the way I approach the data and the outcome of this research paper. I resonate with Reviere when she states, “as a Black academic, I do have a tremendous personal stake in the manner in which Black intelligence is theorized.”<sup>75</sup> I have the responsibility to include the personal as it affects every aspect of my research, including the analysis process.

## Findings

### *One-on-One Interview*

Didier Awadi grew up in a Pan-African environment, with his Beninese father and Cape-Verdean mother. Due to his diverse background, Awadi was naturally drawn to students coming from different francophone West African countries. As a result, he befriended students of different African nationalities who became his *grands frères*.<sup>76</sup> Discussions with his *grands frères*, who identified as anarchists, communists, and refugees, further awakened his Pan-African consciousness. With their guidance, Awadi started reading the works of Diop, Amadou Hampâté Bâ, Franz Fanon, and others. In his senior year of high school, Awadi had an English teacher who introduced him to the

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<sup>70</sup> Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, 191.

<sup>71</sup> Reviere, “Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology,” 719.

<sup>72</sup> Reviere, “Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology,” 716.

<sup>73</sup> Reviere, “Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology,” 720.

<sup>74</sup> Reviere, “Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology,” 717.

<sup>75</sup> Reviere, “Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology,” 714.

<sup>76</sup> *Grands frères* is French for *big brothers*.

speeches of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, which broadened his horizon of Pan-African ideas. Awadi expresses that all these Pan-African leaders, from Sankara to Diop to Senghor to Malcolm X, speak to the same *emotions* felt by all people of African descent across the world, forging a sense of African unity. These deep *feelings* of hurt and hope are present because, as Senghor stated, they are ingrained in the memory of our genes and connect us to one another and to our ancestors, who lived through slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism.

Awadi's personal journey transformed him into a politically engaged artist. Awadi claims, "I did not *choose* to be a politically engaged artist, no. I became one through my personal journey."<sup>77</sup> Awadi's process of growth allowed him to define his Pan-African and political values and beliefs more clearly. This consequential change was naturally reflected in his music, forging his political identity as an artist. Awadi states, "[w]hat you're thinking and feeling is reflected when you make music."<sup>78</sup> The music one produces reflects what is in one's mind and heart, and as a result, Awadi's music can only be conscious and politically charged considering that is who he is as an African citizen and a human being.

By reading, listening to his elders, and learning from Pan-African leaders, Awadi educated himself about Africa's resistant history and wanted to share this knowledge with African youth not only in Africa but across the world. One person who truly influenced Awadi on his personal and musical journey is the "Upright Man" of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara. Even though Awadi was only a teenager when Sankara became the president of Burkina Faso, Awadi witnessed how a man changed a nation with his Pan-African beliefs and practices. While Awadi does not want to idealize an individual man, for him, Sankara embodies the upright man and the Pan-African ideal.<sup>79</sup>

When Sankara became president, he continued to live a simple life while he sought to transform his country. His policies revitalized the Burkinabe economy and Burkina Faso was able to achieve self-sufficiency in just four years. At the same time, Sankara lived as the poorest president in solidarity with his people. He intelligently and passionately spoke with African pride to the international community against colonialism and neocolonialism. In addition to dramatically improving health care, Sankara also reinserted African values and promoted women's rights and roles in society. Knowing this about Sankara, one can only recognize the greatness of this man who believed in his country and most importantly who believed in Africa. Awadi expresses, "[w]hen you see the projects he created and the *mindset* he created among his people, you tell yourself that it [the Pan-African ideal] is possible."<sup>80</sup> Thomas Sankara holds a

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<sup>77</sup> Didier Awadi, (rapper, producer and political activist), in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva, August 6, 2015.

<sup>78</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

<sup>79</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

<sup>80</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

particular place in *Présidents d'Afrique*, which can be witnessed by the three songs Awadi has dedicated to him.

Sankara called for the self-determination of Africa, a belief reflected in *Présidents d'Afrique*. In my interview with Awadi, he explained that the purpose of the album was educational and pedagogical: “*Présidents d'Afrique* is a pedagogical project with the objective to educate.”<sup>81</sup> As a student enrolled in formal education in Senegal, Awadi “never” learned about African history and African (r)evolutionary leaders.<sup>82</sup> Awadi states, “[i]n fact this is the reason why we created the album *Présidents d'Afrique*, because there was nothing about African history.”<sup>83</sup> While students in Senegal learn about Charlemagne, Bismarck, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, WWII, etc. they do not learn anything about their own history and their own revolutions. Awadi states, “[w]ho cares about the Russian revolution, [in Africa] we have our own revolutions that continue to *affect* us.”<sup>84</sup> He believes that, without knowing one’s history, one cannot develop and grow. Awadi’s motivation behind *Présidents d'Afrique* is therefore to educate the youth about African histories understood, expressed, written, and told by Africans, with the goal of contributing to Africa’s transformation.

*Présidents d'Afrique* is founded on the concept of *uhaki*, or justice. *Présidents d'Afrique* **is** *uhaki*, as it seeks to bring justice to Africans by addressing and exposing the injustices Africa and Africans continue to endure as a result of slavery and colonialism, and the need to redress these injustices. His album calls for an African struggle *for* Africans *by* Africans. Through *Présidents d'Afrique*, Didier Awadi also *embodies ukweli*. As a rapper, he is speaking the truth *on behalf of* and *to* the African peoples and to the world community, urging us, Africans, to stand up for our continent, for our people, for our dignity, for our right to prosper and for ourselves. Awadi is committed to *tell* the truths that were not taught to him as a young man in school. He speaks as an African part of the African community, not as an outsider, rejecting the division between himself and his African brothers and sisters. More than attempting to maintain the African community, Didier Awadi wants to *create* stronger, more unified and harmonious bonds among the African community by embracing our *Africanity* and our African knowledges. In this sense, not only does Awadi reflect the concept of *ujamaa* or community in his musical achievements, but also *utulivu*, the concept of harmony. The ultimate goal of Pan-Africanism is to create a more harmonious world that respects, recognizes, values and legitimizes the lived experiences and knowledges of Africans and other historically oppressed communities.

In my understanding, Awadi does not seek to produce objective truth, as positivism encourages, but instead focuses on revealing and uncovering African

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<sup>81</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

<sup>82</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

<sup>83</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

<sup>84</sup> Awadi, in discussion with Joanna Da Sylva.

historical knowledges through the voices and visions of our ancestors, reflecting *kujitua*. Awadi reveals how Eurocentric global systems have dictated the oppressive fate of African peoples. In this sense, I argue that Awadi challenges and rejects the idea of Eurocentric objectivity altogether, supporting Reviere's argument that objectivity is essentially a "collective European subjectivity."<sup>85</sup> Historical objectivity is an impossible goal when history, as a study of the past and a discipline, is written and recounted by the victorious colonizer, who purposely leaves out the voices and experiences of the historically oppressed Other. As a revealer of African historical truths, Awadi embraces *kujitua* and shows through his transformative songs that he continues to engage in a process of self-reflection and growth.

*Track 11: "Oser Inventer L'Avenir," Honoring Thomas Sankara*

"Oser inventer l'avenir" is a song that troubles the image and understanding of Africa as "backwards" by presenting a modern Africa experienced by Africans, not distorted through dominant media.<sup>86</sup> This song, whose title reflects one of Sankara's most famous sayings, "dare to invent the future," highlights the intellectual and imaginative ability of Africans to be inventors, innovators, and creators in their African future. Furthermore, it affirms that Africans participate in the new global era as active agents of change. The song starts with the celebrated words of Sankara spoken at the United Nations General Assembly on October 4, 1984:

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<sup>85</sup> Reviere, "Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology," 716.

<sup>86</sup> Translation of title: "dare to invent the future."



<p><i>Nous avons choisi de risquer de nouvelles voies pour être plus heureux.</i></p> <p><i>Nous avons choisi de mettre en place de nouvelles techniques.</i></p> <p><i>Nous avons choisi de rechercher des formes d'organisation,</i></p> <p><i>Mieux adaptées à notre civilisation rejetant de manière abrupte et définitive toutes sortes de diktats extérieurs, pour créer ainsi les conditions d'une dignité à la hauteur de nos ambitions.</i></p> <p><i>Refuser l'état de survie, desserrer les pressions, libérer nos campagnes d'un immobilisme moyenâgeux ou d'une régression, démocratiser notre société, ouvrir les esprits sur un univers de responsabilité <b>collective</b> pour <b>oser inventer l'avenir.</b></i></p>	<p>We chose to risk new paths to be happier.</p> <p>We chose to apply new techniques.</p> <p>We chose to look for forms or organization:</p> <p>Better suited to our civilization,</p> <p>Flatly and definitively rejecting all forms of outside dictates, in order to lay the foundations for achieving a level of dignity equal to our ambitions.</p> <p>Refusing to accept a state of survival, easing the pressures, liberating our countryside from medieval stagnation or even regression, democratizing our society, opening minds to a world of <b>collective</b> responsibility in order to <b>dare to invent the future.</b></p>
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Awadi chooses to open the song with Sankara's powerful words that radiate a true sense of hope, African pride, and dignity. Sankara, Awadi's hero, states that the people of Burkina Faso took the risk of creating their own path "to be happier," a different path than the one forged by colonial powers to maintain Africa in a state of servitude. His first words speak to our *humanity* and to our desire, as Africans, and consequently as human beings, to find happiness in Africa through *our* own ways.

Sankara continues by stating that the Burkinabé people *chose* to apply new techniques that are better suited to African civilizations. This statement affirms the need for Africans to develop their continent by adopting policies, forms of organizations, and ideas that are grounded in African knowledges, cultures, and values. At the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Conference held in Addis Ababa on July 29, 1987, Sankara argued that, "*nous devons accepter de vivre Africain, c'est la seule façon de vivre **libre** et de vivre **digne***" [We should undertake to live as Africans. It is the only way to live free and to live with

dignity].<sup>87</sup> In order to live freely and happily with dignity and pride, as Africans, we have to embrace *our* ways of living and knowing. This is the only way to liberate the motherland from its colonial chains and allow her and her peoples to prosper.

In the song, Sankara continues by affirming his commitment to “flatly and definitely” reject dictatorial commands from colonial powers in order to attain African dignity that equally represents African ambitions.<sup>88</sup> This statement negates the colonial image of the African “man/woman” as “lazy,” “stupid” and “infantile,” and restores it by defining the African as an intelligent man/woman possessing great knowledge that will propel Africa on her rightful path. Sankara then states that Africans refuse to live in a state of survival and emergency and instead seek to prosper through democracy and innovation. He argues that we, Africans, need to open our minds and our spirits to the African principle of *ujamaa*, or community, by accepting and embracing a collective responsibility that will give us the power to invent the future in a way that respects and honors African ways of living. Sankara asserts that it is the effort of the community, or the African, that will contribute to the liberation and prosperity of Africa. By using this particular speech to open his song, Awadi takes an important anticolonial and anti-imperialist stance that troubles the Eurocentric understanding of Africa and reclaims African identity by asserting our ability to transform Africa’s future by adopting African knowledges.

When Sankara utters his first words, he is soon accompanied by the *kora* of born griot Noumoucounda Cissoko.<sup>89</sup> Noumoucounda Cissoko is a griot vocalist and *koriste* and the son of world-renowned griot Banna Cissoko, *le Baobab*, and *balafon* player Fatoumata Goundo Kouyaté.<sup>90</sup> He is known as a revolutionary griot who has used the essence of his magical *kora* to weave his traditional music with Hip Hop.<sup>91</sup> Noumoucounda Cissoko has collaborated with PBS and Didier Awadi for over twenty years, creating music that connects traditional African sounds with modern ones.<sup>92</sup> Within African contexts, traditional instruments are an extension of the musician and are more than material objects, frequently taking on human features and characteristics.<sup>93</sup> According to Ruth M. Stone, “[f]or many musicians, these material objects possess human and spiritual attributes. They serve to connect the various worlds that people inhabit at one time as well as to denote objects that are not simply material culture in nature.”<sup>94</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Sankara, *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, 381.

<sup>88</sup> Awadi, *Présidents d’Afrique* (France: Sony/ATV Music Publishing, 2010), CD.

<sup>89</sup> The *kora* is the West African instrument of the griot.

<sup>90</sup> Noumoucounda Cissoko, “Bio,” *Noumoucounda Cissoko Professional Website*, accessed March 30, 2016, <http://www.noumou.com>.

<sup>91</sup> Julien Le Gros, “Noumoucounda: Une révolution nommée Kora,” *Africultures*, accessed March 30, 2016, <http://www.africultures.com/php/?nav=article&no=11708>.

<sup>92</sup> Le Gros, “Noumoucounda.”

<sup>93</sup> Ruth M. Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>94</sup> Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 18.

Instruments possess a voice in African traditions that connect people with their ancestors, spirits, and African histories. Stone states, “[s]ound in much of Africa are voices—not only of humans but also of instruments.”<sup>95</sup> Instruments, then, connect the historical past to the present.

The *kora* is the West African instrument of the griot. Stone argues that the *kora*, “a harp lute, is the personal extension of the West African *griot*, the itinerant praise singer, genealogist, and social commentator of the Mali and Senegal area of Mande, West Africa.”<sup>96</sup> By including the *kora*, played by Noumoucounda Cissoko, in “Oser inventer l’avenir,” Awadi connects worlds that may seem separated: the past and the present; the ancient and the contemporary; *griotism* and rapping; and African traditions and modernity. Through voice, both instrumental and human, Awadi reflects the essence of Afrocentric notions of history, which interconnect the past with the present through the reappropriation of African knowledges, ancient and new, and oral literature.

After Sankara’s speech, Noumoucounda Cissoko sings in Bambara, a language that is part of the Mandé family spoken across West Africa by the Mandé people.<sup>97</sup> Listening to Cissoko’s strong voice brings me back to the land of my ancestors: Senegal. His singing evokes in me, as a listener, an urgency to “come back” to my African roots as he transmits oral tradition to modern civilization. Following Cissoko, Awadi comes in and raps, speaking *on behalf* of Africans to European Western people, whose single view of Africa has been a negative one. He raps:

<p><i>Mon Afrique, c’est pas rien que des cases, Elle est loin des images qu’on peut voir dans tes films nazes. Mon Afrique, elle est à l’aise dans ce millénaire, Ici, on parle web, on parle net, on parle de cellulaire. Mon Afrique, elle a des bases plus que séculaires, Mais l’avenir se conjugue en révolutionnaire. C’est pas que j’idéalisé, Je suis un missionnaire, fils de Sankara, mon regard l’oeil du visionnaire Mon Afrique, c’est pas la guerre, c’est pas la famine, De l’or et du diamant, de l’uranium, j’en ai plein les mines. Mon Afrique, c’est pas la mort, c’est pas la misère,</i></p>	<p>My Africa, it’s not just huts, She is far from the images we can see in your stupid/outdated movies. My Africa is at ease in this millennium, Here we speak web, we speak net, and we speak about cell phones. My Africa has age-old foundations, But the future will be revolutionary. It’s not that I’m idealizing, I am a missionary, son of Sankara, I have the eyes of a visionary. My Africa, it’s not war, it’s not famine, My mines are full of gold, diamonds and uranium. My Africa, it’s not death, it’s not misery, Look around you, it’s the sun and the sea.</p>
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<sup>95</sup> Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 15.

<sup>96</sup> Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 20.

<sup>97</sup> Stone, *The Garland Handbook of African Music*, 20.

<i>Regarde autour de toi, c'est le soleil et puis la mer.</i> <i>Mon Afrique, tu peux la voir, elle est dans les rues.</i> <i>Elle roule en Cadillac et en ville, elle prend le scooter.</i> <i>Mon Afrique, tu peux la voir, elle est dans ma rue,</i> <i>Elle vit à 100 à l'heure, à la campagne elle prend le Hummer.</i>	My Africa, you can see her on the streets. She drives a Cadillac and in the city she takes the scooter. My Africa, you can see her on my street, She lives life to the full, speeds at 100 mph, and in the country, she takes the Hummer.
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The first words Awadi raps are “*mon Afrique*” or “*my Africa*.” By using the pronoun “my,” Awadi is identifying himself as an African, giving himself permission to speak about *his* continent on *his* terms. The use of “*my Africa*” is a way for Awadi to speak about the Africa he *knows* and has experienced, an Africa different than the one portrayed in “stupid” Eurocentric movies. By referring to “*my Africa*” Awadi is differentiating *his* Africa from *your* Africa, a European Western idea of Africa depicted as poor, damaged by war, and miserable. He continues by saying “*my Africa* is at ease in this new century. Here, we speak *Internet* and about cell phones.” Awadi challenges the “primitive” Africa associated with Eurocentric history, arguing that Africa is not stuck in the past, as European Western powers may think, but is up to date with different forms of technological innovations and fluent in their languages.

Speaking “as the son of Thomas Sankara,” Awadi articulates that he takes on the role of a visionary and missionary, like Sankara, and claims that Africa’s future will be built on its revolutionary will. Awadi continues by stating, “*My Africa*, it’s not war, it’s not famine. My mines are full of gold, diamonds and uranium. *My Africa*, it’s not death, it’s not misery, look around you, it’s the sun and the sea.” Awadi’s Africa is not *defined* by wars, famine, death and misery, characteristics often associated with Africa in European Western media. On the contrary, *his* Africa is rich in natural resources and is a place surrounded by the light of the sun and the richness of the sea.

Following, Awadi speaks to Africa’s modernity by saying: “*My Africa*, you can see her on the streets. She drives a Cadillac, and in the city, she takes the scooter. *My Africa*, you can see her on my streets, she lives life to the full and speeds at 100 mph, and in the countryside, she takes the Hummer.” First, it is important to note that Africa is recognized as a *she*, a feminine power that holds African civilizations. Africa has often been portrayed as a place where women are subordinate and men “savages” because some stories have been ignored and left out, histories where women (and men) have fought against patriarchy and colonialism. Awadi’s Africa, just like Europe, the US, or Asia, drives Cadillacs, scooters, and Hummers—expensive cars, not chariots like some may think. A Hummer symbolizes luxury and in my understanding this statement is saying: “Yes, we are in Africa and just like in the West, we have money and we can also buy luxurious items if we wish.” I have often heard people condemning Africans for

having luxurious items when other Africans are suffering from poverty. But in the US and Canada, do people not also buy luxurious items while others live in poverty? Is there not poverty in the West as well? Awadi is challenging this double standard imposed on Africa by the European Western world. Subtly, with this verse, Awadi restores a *just* image of Africa, embracing *uhaki* by demonstrating that Africa is not culturally, socially, artistically, technologically, or even economically *poor*, but is rich in many different ways, regardless of forces that continue to define Africa as the poorest and most backward continent. In other words, Awadi wants to bring Africa *justice* by presenting a different history that characterizes the continent in a positive, more authentic light.

Noumoucounda Cissoko follows Awadi and sings the refrain in Bambara before Awadi starts his last verse:

<i>Mon Afrique, elle raffole du KFC, Mais à midi, elle veut du mafé. Mon Afrique, après le tiep, nous on prend le thé, Guerté kemb, café Touba, je peux t'y inviter. Prends ça dans la face!</i>	<i>My Africa, she adores KFC, But at lunch, she wants mafé. My Africa, after tiep, we have tea, Guerté kemb, café Touba, I can invite you. Take that in your face!</i>
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Awadi states that while Africa *knows about* and likes Western fast food like KFC, at lunch, the most important meal in Senegal, she prefers her traditional Senegalese dish *mafé*, composed of a creamy peanut paste and fish or meat. He continues, “My Africa, after *tiep*, we take the tea, *guerté kemb*, or café Touba, I can invite you.” After eating traditional *tiep*—short for the national Senegalese dish *thieboudienne*, a dish made with fish, rice, tomato sauce, and vegetables—Senegalese like to eat their Senegalese peanuts (*Guerté kemb*) and drink their traditional café Touba, a coffee drink flavored with pepper, or *djar*, as we call it in Wolof. Awadi offers an invitation to the outsider to take part in these traditional customs, demonstrating the potential for Africans and Europeans to have a harmonious, instead of unequal, relationship, embracing *utulivu*. It is an invitation to get to know Awadi’s culture, his traditions, his country, and his continent seen through *his* eyes. It is an invitation to learn about the *real* Africa through the real experiences of Africans. After he finishes rapping, the refrain comes in and Awadi ends with: “Take that in your face!” Awadi finishes his song by “slapping” colonial powers in the face by saying “we are just as good, we are just as advanced, we are just as aware and we are just as educated.” He slaps them in the face with *ukweli*.

A single story has been told about Africa through dominant history, and by committing to present a different truth about Africa, Didier Awadi is committing to *kujitoa*. Yes, Africa has and continues to experience wars, hunger, and poverty, but these challenges do not define her. She is much more than that, which is a fact that needs to be addressed in order to have a more humane understanding of Africa. Awadi’s song, which weaves together the traditional *kora*, the voice of griot Cissoko, and Hip Hop beats with



the rapping of Awadi, is powerful in providing a positive and harmonious story of Africa that connects the past – traditional customs and languages – with the present, modernity and globalization.

## Conclusion

For centuries, Eurocentric knowledge and notions of history have dictated *what* is considered history. As a result, many European Western historians have given themselves the authority to *distort, write, and tell* the histories of *all* peoples with, consciously or unconsciously, an imperialist mindset, *silencing* the voices of Indigenous peoples, especially Africans. According to Smith:

This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about Indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized.<sup>98</sup>

As Africans, in order to liberate ourselves from colonial mentality and find our ways in the world, we need to *rewrite* and *re-right* our history by placing our experiences, our perspectives, our knowledges, and our realities at the *center* of the research process.<sup>99</sup> We have to rediscover *our* African past according to the African principles of *ukweli* (truth), *ujamaa* (community), *kujitoa* (commitment), *utulivu* (harmony), and *uhaki* (justice), in order to understand the present and inform a future in which we can prosper as a people. Paulo Freire states, “[l]ooking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they [formerly oppressed peoples] are so that they can more wisely build the future.”<sup>100</sup> By rediscovering and reclaiming our history, we are also reclaiming our sense of agency, realizing that we have the power to *create* our history instead of endure it.

*Présidents d’Afrique* gives life to African history through human and instrumental voices, lyrics, and powerful Hip Hop and traditional African beats, creating strong emotions in the heart of its listeners. With his album, Awadi seeks to break the cycle of ignorance about African history by *retelling* our stories through the voices of our strong ancestors. Awadi reclaims and restores *resistant* aspects of Africa’s historical past when African leaders actively and definitely rejected colonial and imperialist policies imposed by European Western forces. Instead of accepting how things are, Awadi is presenting African youth with an alternative, asserting that things can be different – and at a point in time, in the time of Sankara, Lumumba, Nkrumah, they were! As an African and Pan-African (r)evolutionary figure, Awadi reclaims histories *as an* African *for* Africans, and as

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<sup>98</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

<sup>100</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th ed. (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010), 84.



a revolutionary act that can and should be taken up by all oppressed and indigenous populations.

Awadi's critical Hip Hop music addresses the sociopolitical tensions between dominant history taught in school, which remains colonial, and an authentic account of African histories centered on African experiences. Awadi shares the African knowledge he received from his *grands frères*, his family and his Pan-African ancestors, to create a pedagogical and musical project that completes and contests schooling in Senegal, understood as the "exercise of domination [that has] the ideological intent to indoctrinate [students] to adapt to the world of oppression."<sup>101</sup> Awadi is using the creative and artistic medium of music and spoken words to informally teach African youth about resistant African histories. Through music, Awadi is making African knowledges publicly accessible through *sound*, legitimizing oral literature as a valuable form of knowledge.

As an *educator*, Awadi works through the medium of music to translate African teachings. Through his songs, he engages with political conscientization and encourages mobilization. Like Paulo Freire, Awadi advocates for a critical pedagogy that awakens the consciousness of young Africans so that they question and challenge their global position and posited domination and understand how colonialism has impacted their everyday lives. In this sense, both Awadi and Freire engage in critical and conscious education work, but their means for translating knowledge are very different. Freire is a scholar who uses academic platforms and language to communicate his knowledge on behalf of the "oppressed people."<sup>102</sup> As a result, his work is accessible to those who can (1) read and (2) understand academic language. Awadi, on the other hand, uses music, something accessible and appreciated by many people in the world, to communicate indigenous knowledges. Awadi presents pedagogy with a holistic approach that is rational and also emotional, rebuilding on indigenous knowledges, which include songs, dance, and musical instruments. He is not limiting his work to the cognitive, but draws on the heart and *emotions*—sentiments of community, culture, courage, compassion, pride, freedom, and unity—to *teach*. Awadi's music connects the mind, the heart, and the body, recognizing *education* as a process that goes beyond the intellect to include emotional being. His music advocates for the need to know oneself outside of the colonial paradigm and, as a result, the musical medium through which Awadi works becomes important and pedagogical. In the form of music, Awadi created a revolutionary project that continues to *educate* the young African masses with the hope of creating a free continent in which African women and men are proud, prosperous, respected, strong, and unified.

This paper contributes to the existing literature on Hip Hop by focusing on how Senegalese rapping, understood as a form of *storytelling*, has been used as a decolonizing public pedagogy that reclaims Pan-Africanist visions, histories, and truths, which has not

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<sup>101</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 78.

<sup>102</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 78.

been explored to date. There is a dearth of academic work about Hip Hop in Senegal, yet Hip Hop is central to political public pedagogy in Senegal and throughout the continent. As an international African revolutionary presence, Didier Awadi uses rap accompanied by African beats to awaken the youth to their histories, their realities, their position in this world, and the power they hold in changing their situations. Awadi's efforts to reveal the richness, histories, beauty, and potential of Africa and its peoples as well as his determination to contribute to a better Africa through Hip Hop should be recognized in Hip Hop literature.

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

#### No. 5: Better Days

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

We've lived the past; we see today.  
But who knows what the future holds?  
Who knows what its dice may say?  
Of how its mystery heart unfolds?

**Chorus:** "Better days are coming," says the system.  
"Unlike these days of 'we' and 'them'."  
We may doubt what the system says,  
But let's believe in better days.

To be sung,  
the other  
stanzas rapped

Days when our nation shall unite,  
And its band of colors shall form a rainbow,  
And all its might shall be a light  
That warms all with its virtuous glow.

*Repeat chorus.*

When good rewards and evil pays,  
As those who do them sure deserve.  
Such shall be the better days,  
The system says, and then I laugh.

*Repeat chorus.*

And the system's chains shall free our poor,  
And the drugs of war vacate our streets,  
And our dog-fight ghettos' streams of gore  
Shall no more seem the best of feats.

*Repeat chorus.*

The best of feats to the youths misled,  
Misled by those who should guide them right,  
Their minds blinkered and fed  
With illusions — by people who should raise their sight.

*Repeat chorus.*

Days of action and not of mere words,  
Hollow like their faith who speak them:  
The minions of power and their overlords,  
Who make a liar of the system.

*Repeat chorus.*

We know the present, have lived the past,  
They've told us how the future swings;  
And, yes, I hope they'll act at last  
To make their pledges what it brings.

*Repeat chorus.*

February 16, 2018

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## **"I Speak Hip Hop": An Informative Interview about Generation Hip Hop and the Universal Hip Hop Museum**

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*Tasha Iglesias and Travis Harris*

How did a group of obscure and disenfranchised teenagers from the South Bronx develop an identity and a culture that has spread around the world? As this special issue argues, Hip Hop did not go global in the late 1970s and early 1980s, this African diasporic and Latinx phenomenon has always been global. Hip Hoppas and scholars have discussed the ways in which the flows and ciphaz out of New York continued to flow throughout the world, even to the most minute corners of the earth. While we are aware of the Universal Zulu Nation European trips in the early 1980s, recognize how other countries first saw Hip Hop in movies and heard rap music on the radio, the question of the specific details of Hip Hop's expansion remain unanswered. We contend that Hip Hoppas still need to identify a clear timeline and genealogy of the historical growth of Hip Hop in the 1970s and 1980s, and document contemporary flows and ciphaz around the world. "I Speak Hip Hop" interviews former and current members of Generation Hip Hop (GHH) and Universal Hip Hop Museum (UHHM) in order to elucidate two examples in which Hip Hop flows and ciphaz between multiple countries such as the United States, Cuba, South Africa, Spain and Uganda. It also points to the need to revisit Hip Hop's flows and ciphaz throughout the world.

The statement, "I Speak Hip Hop," comes out of my (Iglesias) work with GHH. In August of 2018, I, along with the GHH Los Angeles manager and founder of Radiotron, Carmelo Alvarez visited Cuba for a Hip Hop Symposium hosted by the Ministry of Rap. I did not speak Spanish, but one of the chapter members so impactfully explained, in the little English he knew, that "I spoke Hip Hop," and this was all that was needed. This seemingly insignificant conversation perfectly elucidates Hip Hop flows and ciphaz. Hip Hop provided a language during a moment when communication was unintelligible. Although we both had different backgrounds, Hip Hop provided the necessary communication tools. Hip Hop united us. The bibliography in this special issue highlights the many works on Hip Hop in Cuba and only begins to depict the ciphaz and flows between Africa, America and Cuba, but there is more to be uncovered.

In contemporary Cuba, artists are often paid by the Ministry of Rap, and are not allowed to criticize their government. Stories of resistance are prevalent in Cuba and reminds me (Iglesias) of the early MC's in the 1970s and 1980s. Hip Hop in Cuba is original, its authentic and raw. The MC's there are ready to battle and do it with a flavor

that I have not often seen in the United States. GHH leaders aimed to meet the local artist and listen to the needs of the people. I discovered that Cubans learned about Hip Hop by tweaking their antennas to pick up the Soul Train show in the late 1970's. From there, Cubans improvised and used what they could to bring the culture to Cuba. These days you can see Bboys/Bgirls, DJ's, MC's and graffiti artist across the island. While people have come to learn the history of Hip Hop in Cuba, Cubans explain that their story has not been authentically told and their art is often held captive on their island. Although there was a language barrier, through Hip Hop, I was able to understand their story. Their desire for the story to be told accurately and authentically points to our (Iglesias and Harris) position for more scholarly attention on the dynamic expansion of Hip Hop cultures.

This interview was conducted in November 2018. The answers reflect the time period in which the interview was conducted and does not represent the Fall of 2019. The academic publishing process does not provide the best output for timely interview answers but the answers do provide an archive of Generation Hip Hop and the Universal Hip Hop Museum during the Winter of 2018 and 2019. We highlight this for two reasons: two clarify why some of the answers may refer to a future date that has already passed and to point to the need for a quicker publishing process that aligns with the rapid change of pace with Hip Hop. The answers are still useful in providing a snapshot of two Hip Hop organizations that Hip Hoppas, inside and outside of the academy should be aware of. In addition to my (Iglesias) trip to Cuba, this interview reveals how these two organizations got started, Hip Hoppas from different countries and how Hip Hop flows and ciphas from city to city, country to country and continent to continent.

**JHHS:** How did GHH and UHHM get started?

**Terence Barry:** GHH started in unison with the UHHM and are "associate organisations." Initially Rocky Bucano decided to pursue the idea of building an official museum for Hip Hop and Terence Barry and Raquel Delgado decided to start GHH in association with UHHM.

**Tasha Iglesias:** Generation Hip Hop (GHH) originally was created to establish a brand and empower the chapter's communities. As the years went by, GHH began to spread like a fire to almost every continent in the world. The founders of GHH had envisioned a global organization, but instead have experienced a global movement. GHH has chapters in 54 countries and is represented on almost all continents across the world. The first three chapters were South Africa, Spain and the USA.

**JHHS:** Where are the chapters located?

**Terence Barry:** In 54 countries around the world, including Russia and the USA. Please see <http://generationhiphopglobal.org/>

**JHHS:** Woaaahhhh! How in the world, literally, did these chapters spread all over the world? Let's talk about some of these chapters. Can you provide a couple of examples of how they got started? What was the first two or three chapters?

**Terence Barry:** The first three chapters were South Africa, Spain and the USA. Thereafter, a mission statement and constitution were written and Raquel Delgado from Barcelona took up the position of communications director. Raquel is directly responsible for most of the GHH membership build and is now the Chief Operations Officer. Most chapters were already established in social and youth development and decided to join GHH to create a larger and more influential network.

**JHHS:** What was their mission? Goals?

Terence Barry: The UHHM goal is to preserve and curate Hip Hop history utilising progressive peripheral initiatives and technology and GHH aims to empower youth through a global network and ownership of their own brand.

**Monk Matthaeus:** Generation Hip Hop is an organization of Hip Hop artists, educators, and youth development advocates: empowering the global community to collectively change the world through artistic expression, entrepreneurship, and education.

Generation Hip Hop is a global network of hiphoppas devoted to creating strategic partnerships with people and organizations who desire to change our world for the better. Our vehicle is Hip Hop culture. Our fuel is that desire to drive positive social change. Our power is the people.

We exist to empower young people to take on the challenges of tomorrow, such as climate change, hunger, refugees, peace initiatives, etc. through connecting them to a global network, education, and providing opportunities to artistically express themselves. The power of words and images are instrumental in creating change. GHH exists to help young people see that they have the tools to facilitate change through the messaging of their artistic platforms, technology, and entrepreneurship.

**JHHS:** What do GHH and UHHM do today?

**Terence Barry:** UHHM is in the architectural stage with ground breaking due in 2020. In the interim partnerships and fundraising initiatives are constant. GHH is getting ready to launch globally in June with international collaborations with Earthx, Global Green,



Creative Visions and Waldorf 100. Together, we have a combined reach of over one billion people.

**Monk Matthaeus:** GHH seeks to find and promote organizations and individuals who authentically represent Hip Hop culture while understanding the power in the message of their art to either build up or breakdown people (especially young people).

**Tasha Iglesias:** GHH chapters include individual artists and educators and partners with other like-minded non-profit organizations all focused on sharing the Hip Hop culture with their community's and the world.

**JHHS:** What are some that you would like to highlight? What work are they doing?

**Terence Barry:** There is incredible work being done in all member countries and very difficult to say which ones stand out. GHH Uganda work with thousands of refugees and provide much needed relief and guidance to young people that are living in dire conditions.

GHH Philippines work with street children and teach them how to recycle and basic entrepreneurship that culminates in sustainable development and hope.

GHH Venezuela is working closely and determinedly with GHH Cuba to bring about solidarity in Hip Hop pedagogy and upliftment.

**Tasha Igelsias:** In Uganda, refugees gather around to meet with the Generation Hip Hop manager Ras Benard Benzima. The refugees have come to learn how to dance, and to participate in workshops aimed at developing their leadership skills and building a sense of community. Wherever Ras goes, whether it is a refugee settlement or a small community, he uses Hip Hop to uplift, to empower and show love to the people of Uganda. His efforts have not gone unnoticed and has caught the attention of the government of Uganda and other non-profits around the world who see the potential of Hip Hop as a pedagogical tool.

In Spain, GHH's Chief Operating Officer, Raquel Delgado, participates on a panel with other GHH leaders to discuss rap music, poetry and feminism. It is not uncommon to see GHH leaders sitting on panels across the world, speaking on Hip Hop, and how this amazing culture is used to empower people around the world.

**JHHS:** Do chapters communicate with each other?

**Terence Barry:** Yes, that is the key to establishing solidarity in a brand they own and can build themselves.

**Monk Matthaeus:** We want to promote more communication and collaboration as we move into 2020.

**JHHS:** Along with the theme of the special issue; thinking about the many chapters and the work they are doing, do you see GHH and UHHM operating within particular geographical boundaries?

**Terence Barry:** Both organisations are open to working in any geographical locations and have no boundaries.

**JHHS:** How has this influenced your understanding of Hip Hop?

**Monk Matthaeus:** GHH has given me a true understanding of the impact and potential impact that the culture can have on people when expressed authentically and with purpose. As a former Universal Zulu Nation minister, I understood Hip Hop as universal and global, but GHH has taken things to a new level in my eyes. GHH doesn't carry the baggage of religion/spirituality that the UZN and the Temple of Hip Hop carry, and doesn't have any negative history since GHH is new and hasn't officially launched yet. I see endless potential ahead and that is Hip Hop at the core, that is, endless potential!

**JHHS:** Do you think there should be a distinction between Hip Hop and global Hip Hop? Why or why not?

**Monk Matthaeus:** Oh man no! Global Hip Hop is simply Hip Hop expressed within the cultural confines of the people living it. Wherever that happens Hip Hop happens. I will be the first in line to smash that idea as will any true Hiphoppa. Hip Hop may evolve and surely has but it is still Hip Hop. I actually think we here in the USA should look to other countries and how they manifest Hip Hop in their unique cultural circumstances. Many other countries have been less influenced by the entertainment industry and corporations seeking to profit off the music and images of urban youth. Now when folks begin creating something that does not represent the accepted cultural boundaries of Hip Hop and still call it "Hip Hop," that is when I have a problem. That is a whole paper itself so I'm not even going to get started on that!

**JHHS:** Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Tasha Iglesias:** GHH is also alive and thriving in countries that are experiencing political unrest and war. Chapters in Venezuela, Syria, Palestine and Israel often sing verses of oppression and destruction. They also rap about peace and love. When our members are in need of assistance, calls go out to pay for medical care, help with seeking safety and to assist their communities with food or shelter. GHH is so much more than an organization that puts on shows, we serve as cultural and educational ambassadors, and an organization that provides support to the underrepresented, oppressed and vulnerable populations across the world. Stories of how Hip Hop can be used to empower these populations are prevalent within GHH. Each Director, Manager and officer carries their stories and advocacy with them like a badge of honor. In each breath we take, we know the Hip Hop culture brings us together, and our love for our global community keeps us strong.

There is still a lot of work to do. Generation Hip Hop is currently forming as a non-profit in South Africa, where its Chairman, Ndaba Mandela resides. Support and funding for the various chapters have come from individual donations and GHH is hoping to secure grants and funding to support the many programs and initiatives being organized and facilitated across the world. Until then, GHH will continue to serve on panels, serve the community, produce music and art to uplift others and wear the GHH logo with pride.

For more information on our organization please visit:  
<http://generationhiphopglobal.org/> and <https://www.uhbm.org/>

**JHHS:** We really appreciate you taking the time out to conduct this interview and inform Hip Hop Studies about GHH and the UHHM.

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

**A warning to our readers: Please note, this poem contains a reference that might be upsetting and painful because the *n-word* is used (in the opening line). We were not able to ask the poet to provide a commentary on his choice of this word, as he passed away in November. The journal has decided to print the poem as it was originally written, in order to honor the memory of Ikeogu Oke (1967–2018), one of Nigeria’s most highly respected and venerable wordsmiths.**

### No. 6: Good Thing Going

A Hip Hop Anthem

Come on out my niggas,  
Hit the streets my homies,  
Musicians and singers,  
Make the sign of peace.

**Chorus:** We’ve got a good thing going:  
Hip hop is da bomb!  
We’ve gotta detonate it  
Across a needy world.

*To be rapped,  
like the other  
stanzas*

A world that needs awakening  
By all its vibes and tales,  
Whose eyes should not be straining  
Behind those hidden scales.

*Repeat chorus.*

We’ve gotta “legalize” it:  
The ganja of feared truth!  
They’ve gotta see it’s quite fit  
To educate our youth.

*Repeat chorus.*

So they can see the warning  
Before the bogey strikes,  
Whose siren howls by morning  
Behind their rolling bikes.

*Repeat chorus.*

So they can know that schools  
Are better than the streets;  
That living by good rules  
Can trump all vicious feats.

*Repeat chorus.*

So they can see the need  
To rise and band together  
And put away their greed  
And build for one another.

*Repeat chorus.*

And let the rhythm roll  
Across their eyes and ears,  
And the message end their fears  
To chase their higher goals.

*Repeat chorus.*

February 22, 2018

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## Negotiating French Muslim Identities through Hip Hop

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Mich Yonah Nyawalo

### Abstract

In *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity*, Gérard Noiriel contends that in France, the modern idea of the nation emerged as a means to subvert the dominant influence of the nobility, whose rule was underwritten by the aristocratic idea that “the nation was founded on ‘blood lineage.’”<sup>1</sup> Noiriel posits that “the revolutionary upheaval discredited not only the old order but everything that harked back to origins, so much so that the first decrees abolishing nobility were also directed against names that evoked people’s origins: an elegant name is still a form of privilege; its credit must be destroyed.”<sup>2</sup> The rejection of group differences as well as the exaltation of assimilation policies that were strengthened by a social contract in the postrevolutionary political climate reflected, above all else, a contestation of the privileges that had been accorded to the nobility.<sup>3</sup> It is from this historical background that Noiriel examines contemporary arguments regarding assimilation—specifically, which groups are deemed “assimilable” and which ones are not. This rhetoric of assimilation under the banner of *laïcité* has framed hotly debated discussions vis-à-vis the position of Muslims in France within the imagined national community. In an environment where Muslim bodies and symbols are relentlessly quarantined and prevented from “contaminating” secular spaces, this article will examine the ways in which French Muslim Hip Hop artists such as Médine, and Diam’s have employed different rhetorical strategies to navigate their French and Muslim identities through their lyrics.

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1 Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 8.

2 Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, 9.

3 Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, 9.



## Introduction

In the summer of 2016, viewers around the world were confronted with pictures of French policemen fining and forcing Muslim women relaxing on the beach to remove their burkinis, a full-bodied swimsuit. Throughout the summer, multiple French cities enforced a ban on the burkini. The list of French towns and cities deciding to ban the burkini from their beaches was extensive. As the summer progressed, more than thirty French towns had set in place ordinances that effectively banned the burkini.<sup>4</sup> The burkini ban was litigated at the Conseil d'État, France's highest administrative court, which ruled against it – prompting many French mayors, in turn, to maintain the ban despite the court ruling. Defining the burkini debate as “a battle of cultures,” Manuel Valls, the French prime minister at the time, defended the ban by declaring that “the burkini is not a new range of swimwear, a fashion. It is the expression of a political project, a counter-society, based notably on the enslavement of women.”<sup>5</sup> Elaborating on his stance against the burkini at a government rally, Valls further infamously declared that “Marianne has naked breasts because she is feeding the people. She is not veiled because she is free!”<sup>6</sup> As a prominent symbol of the French Republic, the feminine figure of Marianne is influenced by a classical tradition where the gender of a given noun, such as *la République*, determines the personified form of its allegorical representation. Since 1792, the idea of the French Republic was often represented by feminine figures.

Aside from Valls's problematic definition of female emancipation, his comments also epitomize the ways in which symbols, slogans, and ideas used to define the French Republic have been instrumentalized as a means to marginalize the country's Muslim population. In an interview published in *Libération*, French historian Nicholas Lebourg explains that in 1848, the French government issued a competition to choose an image that would symbolize the emergence of the republic.<sup>7</sup> It was in the aftermath of this competition that two images of Marianne emerged: on the one hand, a fully clothed Marianne crowned with sun rays that harkened back to the iconography of the monarchy, a Marianne that came to represent order and patriotic duty; and a bare-breasted Marianne leading the people to social revolution, on the other hand. Thus, while the image of the subversive Marianne was later embraced by the *communards*, anti-capitalist political

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4 Antonia Mortensen and Angela Dewan, “French Towns Maintain Burkini Bans Despite Court Rulings,” last modified August 31, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/31/europe/france-burkini-ban/index.html>.

5 Cynthia Kroet, “Manuel Valls: Burkini ‘not compatible’ with French Values,” last modified August 25, 2016, <https://www.politico.eu/article/manuel-valls-burkini-not-compatible-with-french-values/>.

6 Lilian Alemagna and Rachid Laïreche, “A Colomiers, Valls tente de raccommoder les divisions du burkini,” last modified August 29, 2016, [http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/08/29/a-colomiers-valls-tente-de-raccommoder-les-divisions-du-burkini\\_1475346](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/08/29/a-colomiers-valls-tente-de-raccommoder-les-divisions-du-burkini_1475346). Translated by Mich Nyawalo.

7 Dominique Albertini interview with Nicholas Lebourg, “Il y a une Marianne sage et une Marianne subversive” last modified August 30, 2016. [http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/08/30/il-y-a-une-marianne-sage-et-une-marianne-subversive\\_1475452](http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/08/30/il-y-a-une-marianne-sage-et-une-marianne-subversive_1475452).

groups and others seeking radical social change, the fully clothed Marianne has typically served the purposes of militarists, xenophobic nationalists, and other proponents of intrusive state power. In the interview, Lebourg notes that Manuel Valls's own political positions align more with the historic symbolism of the fully clothed Marianne rather than the bare-breasted one.<sup>8</sup> If Manuel Valls's cooptation of the bare-breasted Marianne exemplifies the instrumentalization of republican symbols in order to satisfy xenophobic sentiments, then the rhetorical dimensions of Nicholas Lebourg's response also mirrors how French Muslim rap artists, like Médine, have deployed similar strategies to answer the growing tide of islamophobia—primarily, by historicizing, reinterpreting, and appropriating French republican concepts such as *laïcité* (secularism) as an integral part of their French-Muslim identity. In the process, these French Muslim rappers question the antagonistic roles they are forced to occupy in mainstream political discourse by presenting themselves as the true heirs of French republican ideals. This article will henceforth tackle how two French Rappers, Médine and Mélanie Georgiades, who goes by Diam's, have responded, through their works, to growing concerns and debates surrounding the presence of veiled Muslim women in public spaces. While there are many French rappers who are Muslim (Kery James currently being one of the most famous ones), Médine and Diam's are two artists who have been prominently involved in debates concerning the polemics of the veil in contemporary French politics. However, before examining the manner in which Médine and Diam's navigate the politics of French islamophobia in their music, I will first briefly historicize French debates surrounding the significance of religious symbols in public spaces.

### Historicizing Debates about Secularism in France

In his analysis of "Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe," Ahmet Kuru contends that current acrimonious debates about French Muslim women's right to wear the hijab in public spaces must be historicized in terms of the ideological struggle between *laïcité de combat* (combative secularism) and *laïcité plurielle* (pluralistic secularism).<sup>9</sup> As Kuru defines these two terms, "combative secularism aims to exclude religion from the public sphere and confine it to the private domain, whereas pluralistic secularism allows for the public visibility of religion."<sup>10</sup> Combative secularism emerged from a revolutionary antagonism concerning the alliance between the Catholic establishment and the monarchy. Despite the execution of three thousand priests as well as the expropriation of land belonging to the church in the aftermath of the 1789 revolution, the church's influence and power were not completely eliminated.<sup>11</sup> It was during the Third Republic that the republicans managed to significantly curtail the church's power by using *laïcité* as a central part of their anticlerical agenda. As Kuru

<sup>8</sup> Albertini interview with Lebourg, "Il y a une Marianne sage et une Marianne subversive."

<sup>9</sup> Ahmet T. Kuru, "Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe: Analyzing French Exceptionalism," *Comparative Politics* 41, no. 1 (2008): 1-19.

<sup>10</sup> Kuru, "Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe," 4.

<sup>11</sup> Kuru, "Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe," 5.

contends, “the main battlefield between secularists and conservative Catholics was education, since both aimed to shape the world-views of the young generation. Jules Ferry, the republican minister of education (1879–1885), played a vital role in the establishment of ‘free, obligatory, and secular’ education.”<sup>12</sup> In the aftermath of these education mandates, fifteen thousand Catholic schools were closed and thousands of clerical teachers were removed from their positions as educators. More secularization laws emerged in the 1900s. In 1905, the secularists passed a bill separating church and state; years later, the Catholic Church’s attempt to undermine secularism during the Vichy regime strengthened the hand of combative secularists in the aftermath of the Second World War.<sup>13</sup>

The growing presence of Muslims in France during the 1980s redefined the battle between combative secularists and their conservative counterparts. Indeed, as Kuru points out:

Regarding the Muslim question, the majority of leftists refreshed their combative secularism and allied themselves with the anti-immigrant and Islamophobic rightists. On the other side, multiculturalist leftists and rightists came together to formulate a new, pluralistic secularism that respects cultural and religious diversity in France.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, in 1989, when a middle school principal expelled three female students for refusing to remove their head covering on school property, combative secularists strongly advocated for a ban on headscarves in public spaces. They argued that the headscarf was a symbol of ghettoized communautarianism that went against the unifying and emancipatory mission of republican institutions, including public schools.<sup>15</sup> From their perspective, religious identities were to be confined to the private sphere; public spaces, which they conceived as “neutral,” were supposed to level all traces of ethnic, cultural, and religious difference. However, as Joan Wallach Scott posits in *The Politics of the Veil*, French schools had also increasingly turned into spaces where “individuality was encouraged (even as republican values were being taught), and students were granted the right to express themselves, to define their identities through distinctive clothing and hairstyles,” thus “in this context where jeans and rasta hairdos were acceptable, many students (who themselves did not wear them) saw headscarves as another form of self-expression” motivated by both religious and non-religious reasons.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, many students who wore headscarves often did so against the expressed wishes of their parents.<sup>17</sup> Opponents of the ban also argued that far from assimilating Muslim women into the cultural norms of French republican ideals, “the expulsion of girls with

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<sup>12</sup> Kuru, “Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe,” 6.

<sup>13</sup> Kuru, “Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe,” 7.

<sup>14</sup> Kuru, “Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe,” 8.

<sup>15</sup> Kuru, “Secularism, State Policies, and Muslims in Europe,” 11.

<sup>16</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 111.

<sup>17</sup> Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 126.

headscarves would not emancipate them but drive them to religious schools or into early marriages, losing forever the possibility of a different future.”<sup>18</sup> Those who supported the ban on headscarves, nonetheless, for the most part, refused to consider the full spectrum of reasons why some students opted to wear them to school; neither did they fully contemplate the counterproductive results that might emerge from such exclusionary policies.

As previously mentioned, anti-immigrant rightists found it useful to adopt secular positions in order to further marginalize immigrant communities. A poll conducted for the French newspapers *Le Monde* and *La Vie* revealed that while seventy-six percent of French educators (outside of higher education) supported the headscarf ban, ninety-one percent of them did not have a veiled student at their institution and sixty-five percent of them “admitted that they had never seen a veiled girl in any school during their career.”<sup>19</sup> The draconian response to the hijab, therefore, appeared to be a xenophobically driven overreaction to a phenomenon that was not widespread. Furthermore, if French immigrants, unlike the Anglo-Saxon model, were expected to disavow their hyphenated identities in order to become French, then far from being an expression of Islamic fundamentalism or a rejection of French citizenship, as some have argued, many French Muslim women wore the hijab as a counter discursive desire for integration without assimilation, as a way to highlight their hyphenated identities, “as an aspiration to be French *and* Muslim.”<sup>20</sup>

The discourse surrounding the veil is part of a larger debate about the boundaries of French national identity. In the twentieth century, migrant workers from North and Sub-Saharan Africa were heavily recruited to work in France as a way of compensating for severe labor shortages. Between 1790 and 1914 the birthrate in France plummeted by fifty percent.<sup>21</sup> This plummeting birth rate was further exacerbated by the millions of French soldiers who died during the First World War. Between 1913 and 1929 France experienced a forty percent increase in industrial growth, becoming the second largest global producer of iron and aluminum.<sup>22</sup> Immigrants who arrived to fill the labor shortage in French factories were subsequently isolated from the rest of the population by being cornered in ghettoized suburbs known as the *banlieues*. After the Second World War, more migrant workers from the African continent were encouraged to find employment in France in a period of industrial growth known as *les trente glorieuses* (the

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<sup>18</sup> Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 33.

<sup>19</sup> Caitlin Killian, “From a Community of Believers to an Islam of the Heart: ‘Conspicuous’ Symbols, Muslim Practices, and the Privatization of Religion in France,” *Sociology of Religion* 68, no. 3 (2007): 308.

<sup>20</sup> Jeremy Jennings, “Citizenship, Republicanism and Multiculturalism in Contemporary France,” *British Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 4 (2000): 593.

<sup>21</sup> Gérard Noiriel and Dominique Borne, *Population, immigration et identité nationale en France: XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1992), 52.

<sup>22</sup> Noiriel and Borne, *Population, immigration et identité nationale en France*, 137.

thirty glorious years). However, in the aftermath of the oil crisis in the 1970s as well as the onslaught of capital flight to countries providing cheaper labor, the shrinking employment opportunities were primarily given to citizens of French ancestry. As a result, unemployment rates in the *banlieues* are often significantly higher than in other parts of the country. People residing in the *banlieues* also have to contend with underfunded schools, increased delinquency, as well as recurring incidents of police brutality. It is therefore not surprising that Hip Hop music emerging from similar socioeconomic circumstances in the United States and addressing the same realities resonates with Black and Arab French youth from the *banlieues*. In French political discourse, socioeconomic problems plaguing *banlieues* residents are often blamed on their supposed inability to assimilate, on their propensity to hold on to their immigrant traditions, as opposed to the systemic government policies that have disenfranchised such regions. Thus, the controversy surrounding the veil, the impetus to forcefully “assimilate” Muslim women by criminalizing religious headwear in public spaces, also gestures towards broader social policies targeted at immigrant communities, who are treated as second-class citizens and are often socioeconomically excluded as such.

### Debating the French Secular State and the Veil through Hip Hop Music

The desire for integration without assimilation pervades many politically conscious rap songs, especially those written and performed by Médine.<sup>23</sup> Born in the French city of Le Havre, Médine (born Médine Zaouiche) is a French-Algerian rapper whose songs have typically generated a significant amount of controversy in the French media. Médine has emerged as a spokesperson for disenfranchised banlieu youth. As a public figure, he has frequently been invited to current affairs television shows and programs that debate the situation of Muslims in France. Médine often attempts to legitimize the coexistence of both his French and Algerian background in his works. His song, “Alger pleure” (Algeria Cries), for example, seeks to dramatize his bicultural identity:

[Song introduction]	[Song Introduction]
J'ai l'sang mêlé, un peu colon un peu colonisé [...] Médine est métissé, Algérien-français Double identité, je suis un schizophrène de l'humanité De vieux ennemis cohabitent dans mon code génétique [...]	I have mixed blood, part colonizer part colonized [...] Médine is mixed, Algerian-French Dual identity, I am humanity's schizophrenic Old enemies cohabit my genetic code
[His French self] Lorsque ma part Française s'exprime dans le micro d'la vie “On n'voulait pas d'une séparation de crise	[His French self] My French side expresses itself in life's microphone “We did not wish for a separation in crisis

<sup>23</sup> More information about the background and continued sociopolitical relevance of Médine can be found in the *New York Times* article entitled “Médine: The Pugnacious French Rapper Who Hits Back at Critics.” The article can be accessed online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/13/arts/music/medine-france-rap.html>.



<p>De n’pouvoir choisir qu’entre un cercueil ou une valise [...]</p> <p>Pourtant j’me souviens ! du FLN qu’avec Panique et haine</p> <p>Garant d’une juste cause aux méthodes Manichéennes</p> <p>Tranchait les nez de ceux qui refusaient les tranchés [...] j’refuse qu’on m’associe aux généraux dégénérés</p> <p>mes grands-parents n’seront jamais responsables du mal généré”</p> <p><b>[His Algerian self]</b></p> <p>lorsque ma part Algérienne s’exprime dans le micro d’la vie</p> <p>“Pensiez-vous qu’on oublierait la torture? [...] Electrocuter des Hommes durant six ou sept heures [...] on n’oublie pas! les djellabas de sang immaculé</p> <p>la dignité masculine ôtée d’un homme émasculé [...]</p> <p>Et les sexes non-circoncis dans les ventres de nos filles”</p> <p><b>[Synthesis of Voices]</b></p> <p>J’ai l’sang miellé, aux trois-quarts caramélisé</p> <p>Naturalisé, identités carbonisées</p>	<p>To have to choose between a coffin and a suitcase [...] Yet, I remember the FLN [National Liberation Front] with panic and hate</p> <p>Owners of a just cause but malevolent methods Cutting the noses of those who refused the trenches [...]</p> <p>I refuse to be associated with the degenerate French generals</p> <p>My grandparents are not responsible for all these evils”</p> <p><b>[His Algerian self]</b></p> <p>My Algerian side expresses itself in life’s microphone</p> <p>“Do you think we would forget the torture? [...] Electrocuting men for six or seven hours [...] We will not forget the immaculate blood-stained <i>djellabas</i></p> <p>The lost dignity of an emasculated man [...]</p> <p>And the uncircumcised genital in our daughters’ bellies”</p> <p><b>[Synthesis of Voices]</b></p> <p>My blood is honey-dewed, three-quarters caramelized</p> <p>Naturalized, carbonized identities<sup>24</sup></p>
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In this song, Médine’s bicultural identity is situated in the colonial history between France and Algeria. The historical antagonisms emerging from this colonial history form part of his split personality. While acknowledging the struggle for Algerian independence as a just cause, his French side, nonetheless, highlights the brutal methods of the FLN (the anticolonial National Liberation Front) and seeks to distance itself from the atrocities committed by French soldiers in the name of France during the Algerian war. His Algerian self, meanwhile, bears the marks of the humiliation, rapes, and tortures perpetrated by French forces. Thus, while one side seeks to distance itself from this history, the other manifests the horrors of French colonization in its accusatory posture. If both selves appear to be diametrically opposed to each other, Médine, who was raised in France but is of Algerian heritage, culturally embodies the synthesis of this contradiction. His doubled-voiced ventriloquy, his ability to speak from both perspectives, allows him to legitimize his hyphenated identity as an extension of French history. From this perspective, France’s ability to integrate, rather than efface, the cultural visibility of its Muslim minorities also means confronting and including the dark history of the country’s empire as part of its republican legacy. Médine’s song therefore tacitly

<sup>24</sup> Médine, “Alger pleure” [video] YouTube, (2012), retrieved January 28, 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgPigYk-YCI>. Unless otherwise indicated, all the songs have been translated by Mich Nyawalo.



highlights the contradictions of republican universalism, whose hostility to hyphenated particularisms that expand what it means to be French tends to instead facilitate policies that are exclusionary and reinforces the very communautarian identities that combative secularists seek to dismantle. As Elisa Camiscioli documents in *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration Intimacy and Embodiment*:

In the case of immigration, the uneasy incorporation of Enlightenment concepts of Man into a national and hence particularist system necessitated a distinction between citizens and foreigners which was, strictly speaking, antithetical to its universalizing project. Because the nation—a bounded entity composed of like people—required citizens and laborers from outside its realm, their particular nature had to be transformed into one which was unitary, homogeneous, and French. In imagining the transition from foreigner to potential citizen, the immigrants' proximity to a biocultural essentialized notion of Frenchness became the standard by which assimilability was measured.<sup>25</sup>

Following this biocultural essentialism, anti-immigrant rightists and non-intersectional feminists in France have often made use of headline stories, emerging from immigrant communities, in order to further demonize minority groups through a discourse of human rights. Troubling stories about forced excision, forced arranged marriages, and sexual violence directed at women who reside in the *banlieue*, have often been employed to homogenize immigrant communities, including their religious practices, and describe their inassimilability.<sup>26</sup> The feminist group *Ni putes ni soumises* (Neither Whores Nor Submissive), which emerged as a reaction against gender-based violence in the *banlieue*, has over the years become one of the most ardent supporters of the secular ban against the hijab, which they argue is a symbol of patriarchal violence and domination. As an organization seeking to combat gender-based violence, *Ni putes ni soumises* have tended to solely focus on incidents emerging from immigrant quarters; they have also demonstrated a propensity to caricature all Muslim men as either unrepentant misogynists or dogmatic violent jihadists in the making.<sup>27</sup> *Ni putes ni soumises* has also exhibited a patronizing attitude vis-à-vis French Muslim women proclaiming to wear the hijab as a personal choice. When Diam's, a militant politically conscious French female rapper, converted to Islam as an adult woman, the organization proceeded to question the artist's commitment to feminism by painting her as a terrible role model to young women who looked up to her (I will elaborate more on this incident later).

It is in response to the Islamophobic discourse of *Ni putes ni soumises* that Médine wrote "*Ni violeur ni terroriste*" ("Neither rapists or terrorists"), a song that sought to problematize the ways in which Muslim men are caricatured in the French media.

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<sup>25</sup> Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 11.

<sup>26</sup> Trica Keaton, "Arrogant Nationalism: National Identity Politics and African-Origin Muslim Girls in the Other France," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2005): 411–412.

<sup>27</sup> Pascal Boniface, Médine, and Esther Benbassa, *Don't panik: N'ayez pas peur!* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2012), 114–120.

Nonetheless, far from condoning the sexism that exists in his own community, in songs such as “À l’ombre du mâle” (In the Shadow of Masculinity), Médine outlines and condemns permutations of patriarchy in both Islamic and secular communities. Médine’s critique of the instrumentalization of secular and human rights discourse to undermine French Muslim communities is especially dramatized in his song “Don’t Laïk”:<sup>28</sup>

<p>Ta barbe, rebeu, dans ce pays c’est Don’t Laïk  Ton voile, ma sœur, dans ce pays c’est Don’t Laïk  Ta foi négga dans ce pays c’est Don’t Laïk  Madame monsieur, votre couple est Don’t Laïk  On ira tous au paradis, tous au paradis on ira  On ira tous au paradis, tous au paradis  incha’Allah  On ira tous au paradis, tous au paradis on ira  On ira tous au paradis, enfin seulement ceux qui y  croient [...]  Je scie l’arbre de leur laïcité avant qu’on le mette  en terre  Marianne est une femem tatouée « Fuck God » sur  les mamelles [...]  Nous sommes épouvantail de la République  Les élites sont les prosélytes des propagandistes  ultra laïcs  À la journée de la femme, j’porte un Burquini [...]  <b>[Exorcism]</b>  Que le mal qui habite le corps de Dame Laïcité  prononce son nom  Je vous le demande en tant qu’homme de foi  Quelle entité a élu domicile dans cet enfant vieille  de cent dix ans ?  Pour la dernière fois ô démons, annoncez-vous ou  disparaissez de notre chère valeur  Nadine Morano, Jean-François Copé, Pierre  Cassen et tous les autres, je vous chasse de ce  corps et vous condamne à l’exil pour l’éternité  Vade retro satana!</p>	<p>Your beard, Arab man, in this country it’s Don’t  Laïk  Your veil, sister, in this country it’s Don’t Laïk  Your faith, nigga, in this country it’s Don’t Laïk  Sir, Madam, your couple is Don’t Laïk  We’ll all go to heaven, in heaven we’ll go  We’ll all go to heaven, in heaven we’ll go  insha’Allah  We’ll all go to heaven, in heaven we’ll go  We’ll all go to heaven, at least only the ones who  believe in it [...]  I cut into the tree of their secularism before we  plant it  Marianne is a Femen with “Fuck God” tattooed  on the breasts [...]  We’re the scarecrow of the Republic  The elites are the proselytes of ultra-secular  propagandists  At International Women’s Day, I wear a Burkini  [...]  <b>[Exorcism]</b>  May the devil who lives in Dame Secularism’s  body pronounce its name  I’m asking you as a man of faith  Which entity has made its home in this one-  hundred-year-old child?  For the last time o demons, proclaim yourselves  or disappear from our cherished values  Nadine Morano, Jean-François Copé, Pierre  Cassen and all the others, I’m chasing you out of  this body and condemn you in exile for eternity  Vade retro satana!</p>
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The title of the song merges the French word *laïcité* with the English verb “to like.” Thus, “don’t laïk” becomes a portmanteau that seeks to differentiate *laïcité* from *laïcism*—in other words, it differentiates secularism, as a republican concept, from the discursive xenophobic use of the term to discriminate against religious minorities in public spaces. *Don’t laïk*, henceforth, encapsulates the rhetorical dimensions of islamophobic secularism, while attempting to safeguard the values of republican secularism at the same time. In

<sup>28</sup> Médine (2015). “Don’t Laïk” [video] YouTube Retrieved January 28, 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-CmuB4euD4>.

his book, *Don't Panik*, Médine contends that secularism is a value that he cherishes, a value that allows him to freely exercise his religion. Médine further explains that Muslims “who recognize secularism and republican values as their own are obliged to deconstruct all the prejudices that people make against them.”<sup>29</sup> It is by pointing at the hypocrisy of criminalizing and forcing Muslim women to remove the hijab or the burkini in the name of women’s rights that his song seeks to deconstruct such prejudices. Médine, henceforth, makes a reference to Femen, the activist group whose slogan, “nudity is freedom,” offers a reductive way of framing female agency; one that ignores the multifaceted and nuanced ways in which the naked or covered female body can equally be used to either contest or reify the patriarchal cultural logic of a given society. As previously mentioned, this reductive interpretation of female nudity has given birth to a debate about the contested symbolism of the naked-breasted Marianne.

Some of the more controversial aspects of Médine’s song relate, not so much to the lyrics, but rather the images and concepts that he juxtaposes for dramatic effect in his music video. For example, several segments of the song’s music video feature a veiled Catholic nun carrying a sign that says “no burqa.” Images of the veiled nun are henceforth also juxtaposed to those of a Muslim woman wearing a hijab. In this way, Médine seeks to highlight the hypocrisy of those who, on the one hand, tolerate the image of a veiled nun as an expression of religious fortitude but, on the other hand, seek to eradicate the visibility of veiled Muslim women from the public sphere by insisting that this particular veil can only be interpreted as a symbol of female subjugation.

As an advocate of *laïcité plurielle* (pluralistic secularism), Médine seeks to secularize secularism, by presenting xenophobic iterations of *laïcité* as a form of religious dogma or fundamentalism. It is in an attempt to secularize secularism that he humorously uses his identity as a man of faith to exorcise *laïcism* out of *laïcité* in his song. He therefore proceeds to name prominent French personalities – the demons occupying secularism’s body – who have publicly and systemically employed the discourse of *laïcité* to criminalize the display of Muslim religious symbols in public spaces. Far from positing an irreconcilable dichotomy between his Muslim faith and the secular state, this act of exorcism enables him to articulate and defend the values of *laïcité plurielle* through the prism of a religious discourse. In other words, it is through his religious faith as a Muslim that he is able to salvage the egalitarian ideals espoused by *laïcité plurielle* from ethnonationalist impulses that threaten to shape French secular ideals into an instrument of exclusion and intolerance. It is through this rhetorical strategy that Médine is able to posit his French-Muslim identity, not as two contradictory elements or concepts, but rather as overlapping identities that reinforce each other.

Just like Médine, the former French rapper, Mélanie Georgiades, also known by her stage name Diam’s, has similarly sought to validate both her French and Muslim identities. Her 2015 book, *Mélanie française et musulmane* (*Mélanie, French and Muslim*),

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<sup>29</sup> Boniface, Médine, and Benbassa, *Don't panik*, 74.

written in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack—an incident in which French cartoonists were murdered by Islamic terrorists for drawing a caricature of the prophet Muhammad—seeks to contextualize such acts of terrorism as being antithetical to the foundational principles of her faith. As previously mentioned, Mélanie Georgiades created a storm of controversy in the French popular press when pictures capturing her wearing a veil were taken without her consent and exposed to the public. The controversy surrounding the images of a veiled Georgiades partially stemmed from the fact that as a successful female rapper in a male-dominated music genre she had often been considered an icon of female empowerment. Songs such as “Ma souffrance” (My Suffering)<sup>30</sup> and “Ma France à moi” (My France),<sup>31</sup> which respectively tackled subjects such as domestic abuse and the popularization of ethnonationalism in French political discourse, propelled her not only as a fierce opponent of hate and bigotry but also as a feminist icon and model for young women residing in France’s ghettoized suburbs. Many French commentators and women’s rights activists felt that she had betrayed her feminist principles by converting to Islam as an adult as well as opting to veil herself in public; they considered Islam to be an inherently patriarchal and oppressive religion that was fundamentally incompatible with the feminist principles they espoused. To make matters worse, the veiled pictures of Mélanie Georgiades which were put in circulation in the popular press also featured her new Muslim husband beside her. Her veiled appearance was henceforth interpreted as a decision that had been forcibly imposed on her by her new husband. Additionally, Mélanie’s Georgiades’s public ethnic identity as a “white” French woman, albeit originating from the ghettoized French suburbs, but whose parents were not Muslim, further spoke to a growing paranoia, often peddled by the extreme right, regarding the Islamization of French society; in this sense, as a popular public figure, her conversion dramatized the ways in which even French citizens from non-Muslim backgrounds could be “contaminated.”

In her autobiography, Georgiades affirms that her decision to wear the veil was purely voluntary; it was merely an expression of her newly acquired religious consciousness.<sup>32</sup> Her subsequent decision to divorce her husband after a short marriage also surprised those who thought that Muslim women were incapable of such independence. In many ways, this propensity to think of Muslim women as helpless victims, devoid of agency, and needing to be rescued by the French state, stems from a tradition that was particularly honed during the French colonial occupation of Algeria. As Frantz Fanon documents in “Algeria Unveiled”:

Taken as a whole, colonial society, with its values, its areas of strength, and its philosophy, reacts to the veil in a rather homogeneous way [...] The officials of the French administration committed

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<sup>30</sup> Diam’s (2007), “Ma souffrance,” [video] retrieved January 28, 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-CjJS7IQdw>.

<sup>31</sup> Diam’s (2012), “Ma France à moi,” [video] retrieved January 28, 2018 from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU0q4\\_3jGY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aU0q4_3jGY).

<sup>32</sup> Mélanie Georgiades, *Diam’s, autobiographie* (Paris: Éditions Don Quichotte, 2012).

to destroying the people's originality, and under instructions to bring about the disintegration, at whatever cost, of forms of existence likely to evoke a national reality directly or indirectly, were to concentrate their efforts on the wearing of the veil, which was looked upon at this juncture as a symbol of the status of the Algerian woman [...] The dominant administration solemnly undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered...it described the immense possibilities of woman, unfortunately transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonetized, indeed dehumanized object. The behavior of the Algerians was very firmly denounced and described as medieval and barbaric.<sup>33</sup>

Here, as Fanon contends, the rhetoric of women's rights provided a platform from which the French colonial administration could not only justify their sense of superiority over the native population whose land they were occupying, but also, to a larger extent, interpret the violence of colonial conquest as a benevolent humanitarian endeavor. Furthermore, as Fanon explains, the French colonial administration assumed that Algerian men would "oppose assimilation, so long as his woman had not reversed the stream. In the colonialist program, it was the woman who was given the historic mission of shaking up the Algerian man," and this was to be accomplished by converting her and "winning her over" to "foreign values."<sup>34</sup>

The discourse surrounding the veil was henceforth instrumentalized as way of putting into effect the forced assimilation of colonized subjects, as a way of denying them an indigenous culture from which proclamations of self-rule might be voiced. Of course, French soldiers and colonialists also had their own patriarchal reasons for wanting to unveil Algerian women. As Scott reveals, "the subjugation of Algeria was often depicted by metaphors of disrobing, unveiling, and penetration."<sup>35</sup> French phantasies of colonial conquest also abounded with images of native concubines and prostitutes. In this context, the eager gaze of the French soldier seeking to apprehend the Orientalized body of the "conquered" Algerian woman is frustrated by the veil she wears.

The politics of the gaze also feature prominently in Mélanie Georgiades's reflections on not only the veil but also the Hip Hop fashion aesthetic that she appropriated for herself. This is especially evident in her recollections of a traumatic incident in which a paparazzo took an intimate picture of her in her bathing suit while she was vacationing in Guadeloupe:

Unfortunately, it was true; they had taken a picture of me vacationing in Guadeloupe in my bathing suit during my Caribbean tour. I could not believe it, and most of all, I felt shame. Shame to such an extent that I locked myself indoors for five days, convinced that the whole world was laughing at me. They had taken a less than flattering picture of me; revealing me in intimate ways that I never wanted my public to see—that is, in a bathing suit. At that point in my life I was young. I did not like to exhibit my body, even when going out. I certainly loved clothes, but the fashion I liked the most were joggings, baggy trousers and sweatpants, not because I wanted to dress like a

<sup>33</sup> Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (Charlesbourg, Québec: Braille Jymico, 2010), 37–38.

<sup>34</sup> Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 38–39.

<sup>35</sup> Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, 55.



boy but because, in a way, I felt more protected when I wore such clothes. I do not like when I am accosted by people's gaze.<sup>36</sup>

Here, it is significant to note that the Hip Hop fashion aesthetic she selected for herself served the same functional role as the Muslim veil she later decided to wear. In fact, even after her conversion to Islam, she continued to find that this particular Hip Hop fashion remained compatible with her new religious convictions: "We started talking about video clips of my image. Everybody had noticed that I now tended to cover myself more than usual. My hair was always covered with either a hat or a bandana. My clothes were baggy. I told them that I no longer wanted to use my body to sell albums. I wanted people to listen to me and not just look at me."<sup>37</sup> In this way, both the baggy Hip Hop attire as well as the veil enable her to embody and deploy a corporeality that seeks to distance itself from the public's intrusive gaze (a gaze that had once violated her sense of privacy) while drawing attention to the substance of her words. While symbols of hypermasculinity, including toxic masculinity, permeate many aesthetic and lyrical dimensions of Hip Hop culture, Georgiades (like many female Hip Hop artists) instrumentalizes Hip Hop aesthetics as technologies of the self that provide her with a sense of agency.

It is not just through her sense of fashion that Mélanie Georgiades decided to express her new religious conversion; she also opted solely to respond to her critics through her music. Indeed, during the veil controversy, Georgiades declined all requests for interviews, judging that such a platform was not the most effective way for her to deliver her message; instead, she asked the shows that had invited her for an interview to give her space for a 10-minute rap session, on live television, where she would respond to her critics. The rap song she performed as an answer to her critics was titled "Si c'était le dernier" ("If This Was the Last One")<sup>38</sup>; it describes the circumstances that led to her religious conversion:

"Si c'était le dernier" ("If This Was the Last One")

<p>A l'approche de la trentaine j'appréhende la cinquantaine, Mais seul dieu sait si je passerais la vingtaine, Mon avenir et mes rêves sont donc entre parenthèses A l'heure actuelle j'ai mis mes cicatrices en quarantaine J'écris ce titre comme une fin de carrière Je suis venu j'ai vu j'ai vaincu puis j'ai fait marche arrière [...]</p>	<p>As I approach my thirties, I contemplate my fifties But only god knows whether I will finish my twenties My future and my dreams are in parentheses At this time, I can count about forty scars I write this song as an end to my career I came, I saw, I conquered and then I went back [...] I took one knee to the ground at the end of 2007</p>
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<sup>36</sup> Georgiades, *Diam's: Autobiographie*, 66–67.

<sup>37</sup> Georgiades, *Diam's: Autobiographie*, 276.

<sup>38</sup> Diam's, (2012), "Diam's en live dans ce soir ou jamais" [video], retrieved January 28, 2018 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3f53c-qe8s>.



<p> J'ai posé un genoux à terre en fin d'année 2007  On m'a dit Mel soit on t'interne soit on t'enterre  Qui l'aurais cru moi la guerrière j'ai pris une balle  en pleine tête  Une balle dans le moral il paraît que j'ai péti un  câble  Paraît que j'ai fait dix pas vers dieu depuis que j'ai  sombé [...] </p> <p> Car je l'avoue ouais c'est vrai j'ai fait un tour chez  les dingues  Là où le bonheur se trouve dans des cachetons ou  des seringues  Là où t'es rien qu'un malade rien qu'une putain  d'ordonnance  Au Vesinay à Saint Anne t'a peut-être croisé mon  ambulance  J'ai vu des psys ce prendre pour dieu prétendant  lire dans mon cœur [...] </p> <p> Ces putains de médocs sont venues me couper les  jambes  Au fil du temps sont venus me griller les  neurones  Ces charlatans de psy on bien vu briller mes  euros  Tous des menteurs tous des trafiquants  d'espoir [...] </p> <p> Dis-moi t'aurais fait quoi si t'étais moi? [...] </p> <p> Acheter un plus grand plasma? Impossible vu que  chez moi j'ai déjà un cinéma. [...] </p> <p> Tu veux devenir célèbre? Sache que la vie de star  est une pute.  Elle te sucre ta thune, te sucre tes valeurs  T'éloigne de la lune dans des soirées vip sans  saveurs  Considère moi comme une traite j'ai infiltré le  système  Aujourd'hui je suis prête à me défendre que sur  scène  Et peu importe si je vends beaucoup moins de  disque  Ouais je prends le risque de m'éloigner de ce bizz  ouais ouais  Je veux redevenir quelqu'un de normal qui se  balade sans avoir 10 000 flashes dans la  ganache [...] </p> <p> J'écris ce titre comme si j'étais toujours en bas  Besoin de cracher mes tripes  Besoin de te conter mes combats  Je suis guérie grâce à dieu j'ai retrouvé la vue  J'ai péri mais j'ai prié donc j'ai retrouvé ma  plume  Moi qui est passé 2008 sans écrire un texte </p>	<p> I was told "Mel, either we institutionalize you or  we bury you  Who would have believed it? Me the warrior, I  took a bullet in the head  A bullet in my morale, it is said that I went crazy  It is said that I took ten steps towards God since  my fall [...] </p> <p> All this is true, I admit it, I took a journey to the  crazy house  Where happiness is found in pills or in syringes  Where you are nothing more than a mad person,  where you are nothing more than a fucking  prescription  At Vesinay at Saint Anne, you may have crossed  the path of my ambulance  I saw shrinks pretending to be God, pretending to  read what was in my heart [...] </p> <p> These fucking doctors came to cut my legs  After a while they even fried my neurons  These charlatan shrinks saw my shiny Euros  They are all liars, trafficking in false hopes [...] </p> <p> Tell me, what would you have done if you were  me? [...] </p> <p> Would you have bought a huge plasma TV?  Impossible, since I already own a movie theatre at  my place [...] </p> <p> You want to be famous? Know that the life of a  star is a bitch.  It gives you lots of cash but takes away your  values  Removes you further from the moon in VIP  events without savor  Consider me a traitor, I infiltrated the system  Today I am only willing to defend myself on stage  I don't care if I sell less albums  Yes, I am taking the risk of distancing myself from  show business  Yeah Yeah </p> <p> I want to become a normal person again who can  walk the streets without being attacked by 10 000  flashes in my face [...] </p> <p> I write this track as though I was still buried  Needing to spill my guts  Needing to count my fights  I am healed thanks to God I have regained my  sight  I perished but I prayed and so I regained my pen  Me who spent 2008 without writing  I regained my team and the love of long journeys </p>
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J'ai retrouvé mon équipe et l'amour des kilomètres	
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In her song, and later in her autobiography, Mélanie Georgiades reveals her battle with depression, including the fact that she was institutionalized for brief periods at a mental hospital where she was subsequently diagnosed with bipolar disorder. She also later discloses in her autobiography that she had long been struggling with depression and thoughts of suicide, even before the advent of her successful career as a rapper. While her devotion to rap music and the acclamation of fans enabled her to function for a while, she eventually succumbed to her depression once the benefits of fame no longer satiated her. Written as a farewell to show business, “Si c’était le dernier” outlines the circumstances that led to her conversion, while offering a critique of various institutions in which Georgiades felt confined. In the song, psychiatrists are portrayed as traffickers peddling false hopes, dealers who overmedicate their patients. The trappings of conspicuous consumption that dominate in a celebrity-driven capitalist system, trappings that she is able to access as a result of her fame, are also taken to task. From her perspective, neither the material rewards of celebrity culture nor the antidepressants she receives are able to give her the fulfillment she needs, leading Georgiades to eventually find solace in religion. Far from being a patriarchal imposition, as many French commentators had assumed, the song presents her conversion as a personal choice made by an individual undergoing a period of great hardship. In some respects, while the veil, on the one hand, enables Georgiades to distance herself from her public (her autobiography documents how, in some circumstances, she is able to hide her celebrity from the prying eyes of the world when she veils herself) her songs, on the other hand, allow her to share intimate details about her life. The veil in combination with her songs offer her tools through which she attempts to construct a non-intrusive, carefully measured, and controlled intimacy with her audience – one that veils Georgiades with a cover of anonymity in her nonprofessional life, while allowing her to share intimate thoughts on stage as well as in her albums. Of course, the anonymity the veil is supposed to provide is also subverted when paparazzi recognize her and reveal proof of her recent religious conversion to the public; a revelation that occurs before she is even given the opportunity to disclose her new faith to some of her close relatives.

### Conclusion

Both Médine and Mélanie Georgiades dramatize the contradictions of French republican values that promote universal brotherhood and equality. Médine’s song “Don’t Laïk” highlights the manner in which contemporary interpretations of *laïcité* have been instrumentalized, not to protect citizens from religious coercion, but, instead, to render invisible the presence of specific ethnic minorities that demarcate themselves by their religious practices. In this way, for some, discourses about *laïcité* have become a way of drawing and restricting the boundaries of French national identity, of identifying who

is or is not “legitimately” French regardless of their official citizenship status. Mélanie Georgiades provides striking examples of such attitudes by documenting personal experiences of xenophobic encounters in her second book. Elaborating on one of these encounters she notes, “even though I do get recognized from time to time, the veil gives me some anonymity. So much so, that I have even experienced unpleasant encounters because of it. For example, one day I was shopping at a commercial center next to my place when a woman, who was passing by, screamed at me: ‘Belphegor! Go back to your country!’ [...] but I am French. In my case, what does it even mean to ‘go back to my country?’”<sup>39</sup> While Mélanie Georgiades was born as the product of a culturally mixed marriage between her Greek Cypriot father and her French mother, throughout her life, or at least before her conversion to Islam, she had always been identified as a white French woman (albeit originating from the ghettoized French suburbs). In this instance, it is primarily the veil, with its symbolism and negative cultural capital, that transforms Georgiades from a French woman into a foreigner, regardless of her citizenship status or ancestry. Thus, while the veil gives her a cover of anonymity, which she long desired as a result of her celebrity, it also has the effect of racializing her as a noncitizen. As Médine highlights in his songs “Alger pleure” (“Algeria Cries”) and “Don’t Laïk,” the discursive politics surrounding the veil gesture towards France’s inability to effectively cope with the multicultural contemporary realities engendered by its colonial past. The republican claims of universal brotherhood generate anxieties when the country’s former colonial subjects and their descendants – workers who formed the backbone of France’s industrial growth – now demand to be recognized as equal citizens.

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<sup>39</sup> Mélanie Georgiades, *Mélanie, française et musulmane* (Paris: Éditions Points, 2016), 102–103.

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

#### No. 7: Why the Cookie Crumbles

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

When their forces strike and my nigga grumbles,  
They say, "That's how the cookie crumbles."  
But people make the cookie crumble  
And fall down with a loud rumble.

**Chorus:** Here's how the cookie crumbles:

The cookie won't just crumble;  
People make it crumble,  
Fall down with a rumble.

*To be rapped or sung,  
the other stanzas rapped*

Or don't they trip a cookie  
When a cop shoots a dream son  
And then lies like a rookie  
To eclipse that human sun?

*Repeat chorus.*

And that's how the cookie crumbles;  
It's tripped or kicked to fall,  
To tumble with a rumble,  
By forces trained to stall.

*Repeat chorus.*

And don't they trip a cookie,  
Each time we're framed for jail  
And some mean cop playing hooky  
Spins the sordid tale?



*Repeat chorus.*

Why won't the cookie crumble,  
Tripped so or kicked to fall?  
And so the cookie crumbles  
Before the eyes of all.

*Repeat chorus.*

The eyes that see wrongs and pretend not to,  
The eyes that see wrongs and leave them so,  
Like those that are trained to stall,  
Are culprits in the cookie's fall.

*Repeat chorus.*

So tell them that the cookie  
Crumbles for a reason;  
And that the why is not so spooky,  
Or the wherefore pleasing.

*Repeat chorus.*

February 26, 2018

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## Configurations of Space and Identity in Hip Hop: Performing “Global South”

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*Igor Johannsen*

### **Abstract**

The spatiality of culture, specifically Hip Hop, and the reverberations between space and identity are the core concern of this essay. In deconstructing and contextualizing the concept of the Global South by discussing the practices of respective Hip Hop communities, this paper aims at laying bare the oversimplifications inherent in those seemingly natural spatial dimensions. The Global South can, thus, not be understood as a concise and objective term. Instead, it implies a highly normative concept and can be made to reveal or conceal specific attributes of the culture in question. Deliberately creating a cultural and artistic discourse in which the Hip Hop “tribe” of the Global South can be understood as politically and socially activist, revolutionary, and highly critical of the powers that are, artists use this concept to inspire a sense of collective identity based on the opposition to the global hegemony of the empire and an appreciation of local culture and customs.

Authenticating the cultural practices of Hip Hop through the incorporation of local aesthetics for these artists goes hand in hand with a re-creation of the material and normative structure of Hip Hop, and the re-enactment of the myth of the genesis of Hip Hop. These voices are able to contribute significantly to the continued discourse on global hegemony and resistance as they constantly remind us about the intricacies of colonial, racist, and exoticizing sentiments whose relevance and significance is evident. Their art exemplifies that, like the issue of race in the US which is far from resolved, the issue of European colonialism still has to be surmounted.

## Introduction

In August of 2016, the Canadian First Nation trio, A Tribe Called Red, released a song along with Yasiin Bey (formerly known as Mos Def) and Narcy, an Iraqi-Canadian MC, titled R.E.D.<sup>1</sup> Both the song and accompanying video demonstrate strong signification of solidarity and identification with native communities and other marginalized communities across North America and beyond. The music video depicts a kind of exodus in which Yasiin, with the help of Narcy (aka The Narcycist, Illumini-Narcy or Yassin Alsalman), migrates from the realm of the Alie Nation to the eternal distances of the Halluci Nation, the first being depicted as streets and corners of an urbanized setting, the latter as endless desert and sky. The music is carried by a simple but intense beat, reminiscent of traditional native North American drumming. A narrator introduces and interrupts the song with explications of what the Halluci Nation represents: its people's DNA composed of earth and sky, realizing that everything is connected and all is sacred, while the Alie Nation, the antagonist, pursues alienation from the interconnectedness of all that lives under the sky in its quest for material wealth and power.

Having been produced by First Nation Canadians and featuring both an African-American Muslim and an Iraqi-Canadian, this song is one of countless examples for the global reach and appeal of Hip Hop culture. Since the 1990s, the cultural practices of rapping, tagging, breaking and DJing have been performed in the most diverse locales on the globe. While media and scholarship in most of the "West" often continue to view Hip Hop as a genuine product of US-American popular culture, critics repeatedly decry the popularity of Hip Hop in their societies as "Americanization" (meaning the devaluation of local culture and customs). A close observation of Hip Hop communities worldwide forces us to reconsider essentialist or reductionist notions and labels surrounding Hip Hop.<sup>2</sup> In other words:

The spread of rap music and hip-hop culture cannot only be understood as an American cultural import that has been acquired by youth around the world. Nor is it solely a manifestation of an indigenous art form and local expressive traditions. Rather, inquiry into global hip-hop movements

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<sup>1</sup> The single is from the album *We Are the Halluci Nation*, Radicalized Records, 2016. The video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXVyQiEPqBI> (retrieved November 14, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> I prefer to use the term "community" when speaking of Hip Hop artists and audiences or "consumers." By doing so, I follow Keith Negus who contends that "[...] fans are imaginative, discriminating people who are capable of making a number of fine distinctions and who actively participate in creating the meanings that become associated with popular music. Fans contribute an integral element to how we understand popular music and particular artists." Keith Negus, *Popular Music in Theory: An Introduction* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 26.

must begin with the examination of local-to-local relationships and the development of global racial identity politics which affect claims to authenticity.<sup>3</sup>

Hip Hop today accommodates all social, ethnic, religious and political affiliations; it is used and recreated by political parties and movements, religious and cultural communities, schools and universities. However, despite this, the meanings attributed to signs, codes and symbols used in the genre can differ considerably between local communities or the ends of political spectrums. In this essay, I focus on Hip Hop from the Global South, including not only the geographical dimension but also pertaining to other politico-cultural spaces formed by the effects of postcolonial heritage, global capitalism, race and diaspora. Accordingly, Hip Hop from the Middle East and Latin America can just as well belong to this category as Hip Hop from immigrant communities in Europe or First Nation North Americans. Global South is, thus, not a geographical construct, but a social and political one – like the Halluci Nation.

Reverberations of the colonial past and the current distribution of power and wealth on a global scale are central in the notion of the Global South. While most former colonies of European powers gained their independence in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the political and social legacy of occupation and inferiority continue to haunt institutional setups and public discourses in the affected societies. In these discourses, the practices of Hip Hop are able to provide ample resources with their historical connection to the Black freedom struggle, which understood the African-American population of the US to be diasporic and colonized at the same time: being robbed from their ancestral land and still bearing the effects of a colonized society within the state of the colonial power itself.<sup>4</sup> Hip Hop as a counter-hegemonic and resistant culture can embody notions of empowerment, agency, strength and independent reasoning, making it a perfect avenue for the expression of opposition and discontent in postcolonial communities and discourses. These discourses cannot be confined to methodological nationalism alone.<sup>5</sup> The state-centric view might be suitable for questions pertaining to domestic policy and national specificities. Researching Hip Hop in the Global South, however, necessitates the realization of Hip Hop not only as a global but also international phenomenon, in which practitioners and fans as well as audiences and critics are able to contribute to a common trans-regional discourse. The selection of examples in this essay, however, covers only a small portion of what Global South commonly incorporates by including native/First

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<sup>3</sup> Angela Williams, “‘We Ain’t Terrorists but we Droppin’ Bombs:’ Language Use and Localization in Egyptian Hip Hop”, in *The Languages of Global Hip Hop*, ed. Marina Terkourafi (London and New York: Continuum Intl. Publ., 2010), 67–93, 68.

<sup>4</sup> Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 37.

<sup>5</sup> The method followed in most chapters of: Tony Mitchell (ed.), *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001); as well as in: H.Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim and Alastair Pennycook (eds.), *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language* (Sydney: Routledge, 2009); and: Karin Bock, Stefan Meier and Gunter Süss (eds.), *HipHop meets Academia: Globale Spuren eines lokalen Kulturphänomens* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007).

Nation/indigenous communities in the Americas, the Middle Eastern region and expatriates who identify as Arab. I don't aim at an exhaustive account, rather, those examples serve as illustration of the theoretical considerations attempted here. Those considerations consist of delineating select features of configurations of space and identity in Hip Hop that are conducive to understanding the reverberations of Hip Hop's global reality and its appeal in the Global South.

The spatial dimension of Hip Hop culture draws together local and global, particular and universal.<sup>6</sup> The forms of its practices are rooted within the immediate surroundings of the artists and their communities while structures are similar on a global scale.<sup>7</sup> Maintaining a deep artistic connection to the local does not preclude that other spatial dimensions might be of significance, like a regional, inter-urban, rural element or even immaterial spheres like an exiled community linked by discourse. Additionally, it is dangerous to essentialize cultural practices from specific geographical entities due to the evolving cultural scene and signifying system. This is deeply connected to the case of identity, understood as amalgamation of several layers of being. Performing identity does not solely involve the local community and "street" together with the representation of Hip Hop as a global culture. The multitude of factors contributing to practices of identification point to its quality as more kaleidoscopic rather than one-sided and homogenous. Additionally, multiple layers of identification enable the practitioners to forge significant ties between Hip Hop adherents over long distances by means of mutual recognition and solidarity. In doing so, Hip Hop culture is able to provide artists and activists in diverse locations with the means to artistically and culturally engage in conversations by using a shared set of practices, codes and signs. In the age of information and digital media, similar topics and issues worked on in different geographical and societal contexts lead to the emergence of trans-regional movements and communities. These post-national "tribes" of Hip Hop culture cannot be limited by geographical or conventional cultural, national or religious borders and boundaries. Appropriating and evolving the cultural practices of Hip Hop, subgroups of the global Hip Hop nation (GHHN) expressly challenge the very discourses that essentialize those borders and boundaries and deconstruct them in their artistic and cultural activity. Concurrently, new forms of demarcations and social as well as discursive formations are created.

### Spatiality – Where We At?

The spatial dimension of Hip Hop culture is usually defined as local and global. Local in the sense that authentication of cultural practices and "realness" as a

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<sup>6</sup> H. Samy Alim, "Intro: Straight Outta Compton, Straight aus München: Global Linguistic Flows, Identities, and the Politics of Language in a Global Hip Hop Nation," in *Global Linguistic Flows; Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, ed. H. Samy Alim et al., (Sydney: Routledge, 2009) 1-22.

<sup>7</sup> I understand the "structure" of cultural practice its rules, conventions and style. The "form," on the other hand, comprises of its aesthetic and affective content and meaning.

precondition for cultural acceptance and relevance in immediate social surroundings requires firm rooting in local, social, political, and cultural spheres. Hence the centrality of “the street” in Hip Hop culture as “hip-hop nationalism’s mythical wellspring.”<sup>8</sup> Maintaining a connection to these “streets” is crucial for the perceived authenticity and relevance of artistic interventions as perceived by the respective community. “Street-consciousness” is a “[...] key value for members of the HHN [Hip Hop Nation]” and “street cred(ibility)” signifies not only social and material connections to local surroundings, it also contains a set of normative assumptions about spatiality and sociability, unwritten rules and codes of conduct that have to be deduced by gaining first-hand knowledge and experience.<sup>9</sup> Since the spreading of cultural practices across the globe, we have witnessed Hip Hop becoming an idiom of choice for people all over the world, be it by rapping, tagging, dancing or the appropriation of the culture’s stylistic elements.<sup>10</sup> In a somewhat oxymoronic fashion, the centrality of the local and related normative assumptions were sustained in this development. Hip Hop heads all over the world reconnect with their local surroundings and reflect on them by using practices of Hip Hop culture. As the structure of Hip Hop went global, the genre’s form, contents and aesthetics were sampled, remixed and thus localized.<sup>11</sup> This might be one of the central features of Hip Hop, enabling it to firmly root and authenticate itself in the most diverse communities and locales.

However, acknowledging the centrality of authenticity in practices of Hip Hop culture does not necessitate strict circumscriptions of how this authenticity is signified:

Instead of searching for authentic forms of spontaneous and unmediated black, working class or ethnic expression, [...] we could ask a more specific question: under what conditions and at which moments do particular musical codes, signs and symbols become used and claimed as expression of particular social and cultural identities? This is a question that suggests that a far more actively political *process* is entailed. It also implies that music and cultural forms are just as much a part of

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<sup>8</sup> Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-hop Generation* (London: Ebury Publishing, 2007), 422.

<sup>9</sup> H. Samy Alim, *Roc the Mic Right: The Language of Hip Hop Culture* (Abingdon-on -Thames: Routledge, 2006), 122. See also: Gabriele Klein and Malte Friedrich, *Is This Real? Die Kultur des HipHop* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003), 42.

<sup>10</sup> Hisham Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2014), xxi. Hisham Aidi adds that it is the idiom of choice for “young” people. James W. Perkinson writes “Hip-hop has become the adolescent ‘idiom of choice’ the world over, today, for negotiating questions of identity and desire.” James W. Perkinson, “Rap as Wrap and Rapture: North American Popular Culture and the Denial of Death”, in *Noise and Spirit: The Religious and Spiritual Sensibilities of Rap Music*, ed. Anthony B. Pinn (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 131-152, 142. As I find that attribution of “youth” or “adolescence” vague and argue that artists as well as audiences can’t be added to this segment in their entirety, or maybe even majority, I did not include the full quote(s) in the text.

<sup>11</sup> Klein and Friedrich, *Is This Real?*, 10.



the making of cultural identities – the process is not simply one way, whereby some fixed identity leads to (or is ‘reflected’ in) a particular type of music.<sup>12</sup>

In other words: culture cannot so much be defined by asking what it essentially is or entails, but rather by asking how and why it is constructed in a specific way for a specific social, political or religious community.<sup>13</sup> What we are then able to understand is not the culture in itself, which is not fixed and will inadvertently change and transform in ways no observer is able to predict, but the construction of culture by humans in their quest to make sense of themselves and their surroundings.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, the localization and authentication of Hip Hop in some ways not only leads to the incorporation of elements found in local tradition and history, but also to the transformation of the culture’s principal vocabulary itself. The first is prefigured in the cultural practice of sampling, not only allowing but almost demanding local practitioners to re-evaluate and re-create local artistic expressions, musically. The second can be deduced by acknowledging that the centrality of the spatial location as a real life setting and point of reference found in Hip Hop, the so- called (urban) street or block, is not necessarily signified using this very expression. In the process of Hip Hop’s internationalization, it has reached areas quite separated from the urban setting or even in opposition to urban lifestyle. The connection to rurality is central in the work of artists with a Native North American background, such as Supaman, Drezus or A Tribe Called Red. While Drezus and Supaman show themselves in videos traditionally dressed and located in the vast landscape of North America without any trace of urbanism, A Tribe Called Red portrays the journey from an urban setting to an open rural space as a liberating personal transformation.<sup>15</sup> The urbanity of Hip Hop is accordingly not a prerequisite, like a paved surface for skaters or the wave for surfers, but rather a signification of the environment of its genesis and its main stage. Its centrality in Hip Hop mythology and historiography notwithstanding, urbanity is in no way constitutive to the authentic performance of respective practices. This includes the aesthetic referencing of urbanity in absence of its material reality.<sup>16</sup> A decidedly antagonist comprehension of the

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<sup>12</sup> Negus, *Popular Music*, 122.

<sup>13</sup> Referencing Raymond Williams’ “social definition”: “[...] cultures are networks of meanings that are embodied, performed and made concrete in particular ways of life.” John Storey, “The Politics of Culture,” *META-Middle East Topics and Arguments*, No. 7 “Culture,” eds. Pierre Hecker/Igor Johannsen, <http://www.meta-journal.net/>.

<sup>14</sup> Stuart Hall, “Introduction,” in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (New York: Sage Publications, 1997), 1-11, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah Manitoypes (Drezus), “Warpath” Indian Summer. (Up in Arms Studio, 2014) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8Cy1Knyu6A>, and Christian Parrish Takes the Gun (Supaman) “Why” Illuminatives, (2015) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiVU-W9VT7Q>, may serve as illustrative examples (both retrieved November 14, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> Yassin Alsaman, for example, argues that “Hip-hop culture is, by far, the most direct aural and physical tradition of urban life. And by urban, I don’t mean young, ethnic, chic or ‘cool.’ Urbanity in this sense would hold a literal meaning – a lifestyle stemming from an urban environment and therefore not a

environment, like deserts, plains, and forests as well as villages and small towns does indicate a deviation from Hip Hop's aesthetic conventions but may, at the same time, preserve its normative principle of authenticity.<sup>17</sup>

The very normative prerequisite of continuous "street"-connection to be perceived as authentic or "real" is, thus, not connected to the material existence of paved streets in inner cities. Rather, the ability to "overcome" one's material, social, political and economic surroundings in productive and artistic ways through the cultural practices of Hip Hop is much more relevant. Being able to comprehend these surroundings sufficiently and to reflect on them endows the artist with agency and authorship, elevating the relevance of the art as well as the social position of the artist among his peers and audience. The amplified and distributed voice of Hip Hop artists is thus able to effectively contribute to public and political discourses, to engage in political and religious debates. Commenting on social, political or religious issues from an informed and locally embedded perspective by using the cultural practices of Hip Hop is the very core of authenticity and realness. The issues referred to and their relevance reflects the social and political location of the respective artist. Those issues, however, are often closely connected to the natural environment which represents a significant part of the life-worlds of the respective community. With Hip Hop properly globalized any habitat is now able to function as the background for its practices.

It may even be possible to delineate "the local" in specific Hip Hop communities without reference to any geographical construct. Ana Tijoux, a Chilean Hip Hop artist raised in France, argues in an interview with *Democracy Now* that music can be generally understood as a way or a tool to reflect on the world and the overall political situation. For her, Hip Hop specifically is able to offer itself as "land for the landless," to provide practitioners with a sense of identity and familial belonging.<sup>18</sup> Yassin Alsalman/Narcy describes the experience of diaspora and the constructive role of Hip Hop in this situation:

We lingered somewhere between the two worlds that made us the hyphen that binds them together, that hyphen is Hip-Hop, a line drawn between the lands that soiled our seed and the one that harbored our fruits.<sup>19</sup>

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rural one." Yassin Alsalman, *The Diatribes of a Dying Tribe* (Montreal: Write or Wrong/Paranoid Arab Boy Publishing, 2011), 34.

<sup>17</sup> Another example, from the USA, would be Bubba Sparxxx, as was pointed out by Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap* (Lawrence: Univiversity Press of Kansas, 2007), 37.

<sup>18</sup> Tijoux, Ana, "Chilean Musician Ana Tijoux on Politics, Feminism, Motherhood and Hip-Hop as 'a land for the landless,'" interview by Amy Goodman with *Democracy Now*, July 10, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ3Gr58dpWM> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> Alsalman, *Diatribes*, 19.

While a history of migration does not preclude firm identification with a specific city or neighborhood, it may also broaden the local to include a more complex spatial sphere. The global perspective inherent to diasporic identities might grant insight into the construction of local spheres of artists or communities. Hip Hop, the “culture for those lacking roots to their family tree,”<sup>20</sup> can be understood as globally diffused cultural practices that enable an international community to create locality and authenticity through discourse. Thus, Hip Hop itself can be made to serve as “the local” capable of offering globally dispersed individuals a point of reference and cultural retreat.

Rather than being invested solely in commentaries on the social and political situation of the immediate social surrounding, Hip Hop from the Global South is concerned with issues that pertain to postcolonialism, displacement, world politics, war and global marginality. Being able to communicate and share experiences via digital media allows the Hip Hop community from the Global South to create an imagined spatiality that can be understood as local in the sense that globally dispersed individuals are able to share, comment and discuss comparable experiences. Thus, the imagined community<sup>21</sup> of the Global South can be delineated by a virtual spatiality circumscribed by discourse, narrative and identity rather than geographical or material space. “Where you’re from” is at the core of “where you’re at”<sup>22</sup> in this case, as it informs perspectives on (and relevance of) specific social and political discourses connected to postcoloniality, migration, globalization and power.

One of the central themes in the political discourse of the Global South’s Hip Hop communities is the decades-old conflict and antagonism in the Middle East, specifically between Israel and Palestine. The history and current configuration of the conflict is seen as an example of the ills produced by imperial hegemony and colonization. In this discourse, Israel is seen as the principal aggressor and heir of imperial European powers. As far as Hip Hop is concerned, related cultural practices are employed literally as cultural weapons from a postcolonial perspective. In 2006, the Israeli-Palestinian Hip Hop formation DAM (Arabic for “blood” and acronym for “Da Arab MCs”) posed the rhetorical question “Who is the terrorist?” in their song “Min Irhabi?” which became an instant hit in the Arabic-speaking Hip Hop tribe.<sup>23</sup> Another example for the cultural struggle of Palestinians facing Israeli attempts to annihilate Palestinian culture is the song “Al Kufiya Arabiya” by Shadia Mansour feat. M1 of Dead Prez, published 2011 and

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<sup>20</sup> Alsalman, *Diatribes*, 27.

<sup>21</sup> This term was introduced by Benedict Anderson in his treatment of nationalism. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> The original quote by Rakim Allah is: “It ain’t where you from, it’s where you at.” From the lyrics to “I Know You Got Soul” from the album *Paid in Full* (The Island Def Jam Music Group, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> The video (with English subtitles) can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duwsH-gAmuM> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

already regarded as a classic.<sup>24</sup> The song criticizes the devaluation of a central symbol of Palestinian identity and resistance, the checkered scarf, traditionally in red or black, that is used in many Arab regions and was made a political symbol by the militant Palestinian resistance during the 1970s. In the song, Shadia Mansour expresses outrage over the commodification of this national symbol and reclaims it as a part of the cultural resistance movement, furthermore expressing a clear anti-Zionist perspective. Another one of her songs, “Lazim netghayyar” (We Have To Change), features the Syrian-American rapper Omar Offendum and recapitulates the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict from a Palestinian perspective.<sup>25</sup> This song and the accompanying video are designed to literally school the listener and viewer about the intricacies of the conflict which are often not taken into consideration by major media outlets. Similar to the achievement of the Hip Hop generation in the US in schooling its adherents about their history as African-Americans, strengthening the relevance of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights, Black Arts and Black Power movements, Shadia Mansour uses rap in an effort to realize what the Hip Hop proverb “each one teach one” embodies.

Other works that comment on the political situation of Palestine include the collaboration between Iraqi-British Lowkey and Immortal Technique from the US called “Voices of the Voiceless.”<sup>26</sup> In the lyrics, Lowkey connects his geographical spatiality to the political geography of Palestine by rapping:

*From West End to the Westbank,  
I write righteous rhymes with my right  
And wrestle the devil with my left hand*

While “West End” refers to a part of London, the home of the artist, the “Westbank” signifies the Palestinian Territories between Israel and the Jordanian Kingdom. The second part of the verse infers Lowkey’s claim to engage in a socially and politically virulent discourse through art, using it as a means to speak truth to power. With this song and others (while Lowkey’s album is called *Soundtrack to the Struggle*, Immortal Technique titled one of his *Revolutionary* and *The 3rd World*)<sup>27</sup> both artists position themselves as parts of an international Hip Hop community engaged in exposing what they perceive to be a hegemonic and racist system of world domination

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<sup>24</sup> Shadia Mansour, “Al Kufiya Arabiya,” video retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21OXQ4m1-Bo> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Shadia Mansour, “Lazim netghayyar (We have to change).” See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LcLqP-GOj0> for the official video and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87rk2sd7TCs> for a version with English subtitles (both accessed November 15, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Felipe Coronel and Kareem Dennis “Voice of the Voiceless” *Soundtrack to the Struggle*. (Mesopotamia Music, 2011). See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NLH53kIbDk> for a lyrical video (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>27</sup> Lowkey published his album 2011 with Mesopotamia Records. Immortal Technique published *Revolutionary Vol. 1* in 2006, *Revolutionary Vol. 2* 2004 and *The 3rd World* in 2008, all with Viper Records.

upheld by the American empire and its vassals. However, acknowledging that this is accomplished through the cultural practices of Hip Hop does not necessarily mean that Hip Hop is rebellious, that is to say, by definition, a “weapon of the weak.”<sup>28</sup> The very same cultural techniques are employed by those on the opposite side of the political spectrum, like Subliminal or Shadow MC, Israeli Zionist rappers whose songs and videos glorify the state of Israel and its military.<sup>29</sup> The cultural practices of Hip Hop are not exclusive to specific segments of society and this obviously affects the understanding of those practices in different contexts. This is, as Terry Eagleton reminds us, due to the aesthetic comprising “the whole region of human perception and sensation,” that is,

from the beginning a contradictory, double-edged concept. On the one hand, it figures as a genuinely emancipatory force – as a community of subjects now linked by sensuous impulse and fellow-feeling [...] each safeguarded in its unique particularity while bound at the same time into social harmony [...]. On the other hand, the aesthetic signifies [...] a kind of “internalised repression”. Inserting social power more deeply into the very bodies of those it subjugates, and so operating as a supremely effective mode of political hegemony.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, there may be huge differences between local communities in close proximity while others can be on different continents expressing similar perspectives and attitudes in their art. Rap and Hip Hop became such a universal language that the most diverse political, social and racial affinities are now expressed through the use of its register. Politicians, corporations, teachers, community workers, cultural critics and many more see in Hip Hop culture a kind of toolbox at their disposal for meeting various goals.<sup>31</sup> In this light, I consider it fruitful to identify different Hip Hop communities not by geographical location alone, but also by closely observing discourse and aesthetics or the cognitive and sensual contents of its practices. Consequently, instead of observing national or local Hip Hop communities as Arab, Egyptian or Cairene Hip Hop, I argue that it is imperative to

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<sup>28</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>29</sup> Sujatha Fernandes, *Close to the Edge: In Search of the Global Hip Hop Generation* (London and New York: Verso, 2011), 15. Their songs often feature light-hearted wishes for peace between Israelis and Palestinians but contain also the glorification of the state, society, history and military of Israel. See “Prachim baKane” (Flowers in the Gun Barrel) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mh94v1zosyg> or “Tikva” (Hope) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ruI9liCHBQ> as examples (both retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>30</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 13 and 28.

<sup>31</sup> Former Democratic presidential nominee and secretary of state Hillary Clinton described Hip Hop as a tool for diplomacy, claiming that “Hip-hop is America” (Aidi, *Rebel Music*, 221). Especially regarding Muslim-majority states and societies: “Hip-hop [...] is the music of choice for ‘perception management’ and ‘strategic communication’ with young Muslims, because of American hip-hop’s long-standing relationship with Islam” (Aidi, *Rebel Music*, 225). The current prime minister of Israel used a song of the Jordanian Hip Hop group *Torabyeh* in one of his campaign videos, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/benjamin-netanyahu-sued-using-jordan-hip-hop-song-likud-campaign-video-featuring-isis-1488537> (retrieved September 27, 2016). Other examples are the numerous grassroots initiatives promoting social, ethnic, political, and cultural awareness through the practices of Hip Hop all over the world.



pay attention to the specific aesthetic and ideological connections made within the respective practices in their social and discursive environment. In the case of Egyptian rap, variations concerning connections to the larger Arab world, the significance of the Muslim community, the antagonist position to Israel, the role of poetry in Arab history and tradition or the relevance of historical and political ties to societies with similar postcolonial sentiments might be more central to the artistic expression than national sentiment. In this way, discourse and identity, rather than the immediate material reality or geographical location, is constitutive of the practices employed by the artist(s) at hand.

### Identity – Gaining One’s Definition

Here, identity is not understood as something given, as preordained and inescapable. Instead, I perceive identity as the (un)conscious construction of oneself and others by using language and communication. Concomitant to the diversity of spatial affiliations possible through engaging in Hip Hop’s cultural practices, a plethora of identities can be constructed or claimed on the basis of some perceived features that are deemed crucial by oneself or the social and discursive surroundings. Being identified as “Black,” for example, might be in itself a minor feat for the individual but it gains significance through racist notions, forcing the individual to react to negative attributions others associate with Black. On the other hand, identifying oneself as Black can be the source of genuine empowerment by associating it with several qualities positively distinguishing Blackness from other identity constructions. Constructing one’s identity, gaining one’s definition,<sup>32</sup> is a complex activity involving cultural and discursive negotiation with the respective social sphere. Defining oneself is as much an action as it is a reaction to the social and material surroundings or, rather, to how one defines these surroundings based on one’s own observations from one’s own specific point of view. Hence, the definition of Hip Hop as Black culture.<sup>33</sup> This is not to imply that Black culture contains practices crafted or used solely by Black communities, but rather that these practices can be derived from social and cultural situations of those defined as Black during a specific time and at a specific place. Thus, Black culture is endowed with normative foundations related to those communities. Through this connection, the structures of Hip Hop’s cultural practices potentially contain qualities of empowerment, authenticity, pride and self-assurance, qualities that enable Hip Hop communities worldwide to use and recreate Hip Hop practices as cultural and artistic weapons.

Consequently, the artists I am concerned with remind us of the global impact of not only Hip Hop’s cultural practices, but also of the social and political issues outside of the immediate scope of the North American and European perspective. Utilizing Hip

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<sup>32</sup> Lonnie Corant Jaman Shuka Rashid Lynn and Thomas DeCarlo Callaway “G.O.D. Gaining One’s Definition” *One Day It’ll All Make Sense*, Relativity Records, 1997.

<sup>33</sup> See the groundbreaking and pioneering work of Tricia Rose, whose title *Black Noise* alludes to understanding Hip Hop as a genuinely “Black” culture. Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).



Hop tailored to fit their local, diasporic, political or religious identity, Hip Hoppers are able to respond to master narratives and hegemonic discourses. In the case of Hip Hop from the Global South these hegemonic narratives and discourses emanate from the sphere of the West (or North). In engaging with and challenging them, members of Hip Hop's Global South tribe not only contribute to and complicate the relevant discourses surrounding race, nationalism and power, they also create counter narratives and forge solidarity movements, re-defining their own identity while challenging the essentializing notions projected onto them by hegemonic powers. Narcy, to give one prime example, challenges prevalent stereotyping of Arab culture and identity in Western discourses through his art, be it musically, through accompanying videos and artwork or by lecturing at cultural centers and universities.<sup>34</sup> Being a scholar in addition to being a musician, he teaches classes on Hip Hop culture at the University of Montreal. In this endeavor, he is not only disrupting romanticizing and demonizing notions of Arabs or the religion of Islam in the global (i.e. Western) public discourse; he also actively employs a critique vented towards other Hip Hop artists who use simplified tropes of Arab stereotypes in Hip Hop culture itself.<sup>35</sup> In a reply to Busta Rhymes' "Arab Money," he deconstructs the song as generally being racist towards Arabs by reproducing these essentialized images.<sup>36</sup>

In challenging the simplified notions of identity offered by hegemonic discourses in media, art and scholarship for people from the Global South, artists like Narcy are able to create a transnational community and movement. In the introductory scene to the video of the song P.H.A.T.W.A., he claims that "Iraq is the new black" and in the song he continuously criticizes the effects of the US administration's "War on Terror" following 9/11, rapping:

*We went from supported to subordinate;  
Can't afford it, ordered;  
My motherland smothered and mortared;  
Morbid, at borders;  
I'm sorted out from beardless cats;  
That boarded the plane as I was boarding;*

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<sup>34</sup> The most obvious example would be the song "Average Type" feat. Meryem Saci off the *We Are the Medium EP*, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Bzaaqmb1V8> for the video (retrieved November 15, 2016). The English lyrics ridicule essentializing attributions of "Arabness."

<sup>35</sup> As Stuart Hall remarked: "[...] the global is the 'self-presentation of the dominant particular,'" which is not only true in political or economic discourse but includes cultural practices and aesthetics that have a global reach and appeal, prime among these is Hip Hop. Quoted in: Negus, *Popular Music*, 174.

<sup>36</sup> Travis George Smith Jr. and Rondell Edwin Turner, "Arab Money," *Back on My B.S.* (Universal Motown, 2009). This observation was made by May Alhassen and presented by her in 2014 during the Annual Academy of Religion Conference (AAR) in San Diego. To obtain more information about her, refer to: <http://www.mayalhassen.com/>. The song by Busta Rhymes is off the album *Back on my B.S.*, Flipmode and Universal Motown 2009. The reply, "The Real Arab Money" by Narcy (then "the Narcycist") can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0E3BhHkblE> (both retrieved November 15, 2016).

*Then detained, I can't call it;  
Mic check when they search my Jordans.*<sup>37</sup>

Issues of war and racial profiling are dealt with artistically while the claim of representing the “new Black” epitomizes the marginalizing effect of these policies on Arabs. Taking up a different issue in the discourse on terrorism and security, the Phillipino-Syrian rapper Chyno engages artistically with the phenomenon of suicide bombers:

*You idolize sinners, I'll take a ride with 'em;  
To symbolize freedom, I'll dive into hell;  
With all the fire there, I'll find some light in it;  
Strap it to the chest, light the dynamite in us*<sup>38</sup>

In addition to reflecting upon the war in Syria, Chyno comments on the restrictions endured by people like him, who don't enjoy similar rights, freedoms and possibilities due to their place of origin: “Why these embassies don't give me no visa? Look, I'm educated and my mother's Filipina; But your passport says Syria, so you don't fit our criteria.”<sup>39</sup> That the complex relationship between Global South and West not only includes demonizing and vilifying aspects but also an equally destructive form of romanticizing and objectifying the “other”<sup>40</sup> is reiterated by Narcy in a collaboration with DAM for the song “Hamith Hiloo (Bittersweet).”<sup>41</sup> In it, the fascination with an “Arab Rap” is ridiculed, while at the same time, rappers are criticized for copying their mainstream Western counterparts, including narratives of gangsterism, materialism, misogyny and homophobia. Thus, the cultural practices themselves are viewed as empowering while the mere imitation of US-rap is deemed unauthentic.

These topics account for a part of the issues circumscribing the tribe of the Global South in the GHHN. Shared experiences and comparable methods of reflection on these topics in Hip Hop lead to the creation of a transnational community of the marginalized, drawn together in a shared notion of rebellion against hegemonic imperial powers that materially and discursively colonize people's minds. This is perceived as being accomplished through political supremacy in connection with massive dissemination and distribution of cultural products and artifacts furthering consumerism at the expense of the disadvantaged. The voice of the Global South positions itself as an advocate of the exploited and colonized on a global scale, the voice of the global poor or the voice of the

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<sup>37</sup> Yassin Alsaman. “P.H.A.T.W.A” The Narcicys (Paranoid Arab Boy Music, 2009) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtoHCUMpNMY> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Nasser Shorbaji. “O.P.P,” Making Music to Feel at Home.( Coffeehouse Records, 2015)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5MTGu7SeKc> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Nasser Shorbaji “Ballad of an Exodus” (Coffeehouse Records, 2015) see the lyrics here: <http://genius.com/Chyno-ballad-of-an-exodus-lyrics> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLxnXuczz3s> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

voiceless. A considerable part of this voice, it is worth noting, uses one or more of the Arabic dialects. Sujatha Fernandes in 2012 posited Arabic as “the new lingua franca of the hip-hop world.”<sup>42</sup>

Emphasizing the solidarity between marginalized communities globally, Ana Tijoux aesthetically unites the struggle of postcolonial subjects in South America, Africa and the Middle East in her song “Somos Sur” (We Are the South).<sup>43</sup> The music video shows her rapping on rooftops in an urban Latin American setting, surrounded by people dressed in traditional garments and dancing together in a traditional, communal way. She is accompanied by Shadia Mansour, who delivers an Arab verse to the song and performs in a traditional Palestinian dress, a trademark of hers used in several videos as well as live performances.

The lyrics propose the Global South to be a social and political space of similarly marginalized communities. Ana Tijoux describes her motivation for this song as wanting to make a connection between countries and societies of the South due to their similarities concerning issues of identity and resistance.<sup>44</sup> This prominence of unity has been a recurrent theme in Hip Hop since its emergence and is re-created and re-imagined for various purposes. Another rap artist from Lebanon, Malikah, which literally translates to “Queen,” envisions the unity of the Arab world in her songs and on shows, leading the audience in chants demanding solidarity between Arabs as a precondition for culturally and politically regaining strength and global relevance.<sup>45</sup> The Egyptian group Arabian Knightz realized this unity partly through artistic means with their song “Uknighthed,” an eleven-minute piece in which dozens of MCs all over the Arab-speaking world contribute a verse in either Arabic or English. Notably, the refrain consists of the following statement: “Hip Hop ain’t dead; it never died; it just moved to the Middle East where the struggle is still alive.”<sup>46</sup> The corresponding album bears the programmatic title “Uknighthed States of Arabia.”

These songs and the accompanying videos exemplify perfectly the way in which Hip Hop is used as a basis for re-imagining postcolonial identities. While the absence of politically charged and conscious Hip Hop is decried in media and scholarship concerned

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<sup>42</sup> Sujatha Fernandes, “The Mixtape of the Revolution”, *The New York Times*, January, 29, 2012.<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/30/opinion/the-mixtape-of-the-revolution.html> (retrieved October 15, 2016).

<sup>43</sup> The song is off the album *Vengo*, Nacional Records 2014. The video is available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKGUJXzxNqc> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>44</sup> Tijoux, *Democracy Now*.

<sup>45</sup> That could be observed, for example, during her performance at the “The Word Is Yours”-Festival in Amman, Jordan in October 2015, a small festival with several known and lesser known rap artists from the region that was free to the public and staged on the premises of the 7Hills Skatepark in downtown Amman.

<sup>46</sup> Karim Adel, Hesham Abed, and Ehab Adel, “Uknighthed,” *Uknighthed State of Arabia* (Magnum Opus Music 2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ma-avgYw5Sw> (retrieved 15 November, 2016).

with the genre's US-American platform,<sup>47</sup> Hip Hop as voice of the excluded and alienated continues to thrive in the Global South. Hip Hop did not only travel to every corner of the world, it is being re-created to fit the needs and artistic expressions of diverse social, political and religious communities. The noteworthy connection of the essentially "modern" (or postmodern) form of music-making in Hip Hop, born in postindustrial urban settings of the USA in the late 1970s, with clearly indigenous or "folk" aesthetics expressed by traditional garments and dance confirms this observation visually and acoustically. That makes it not only possible but consistent to use originally very "American" cultural practices to demand that all "Yankees" in Latin America should leave the continent.<sup>48</sup> Thus, it is indeed questionable to support the claim of Hip Hop being a way of 'Americanizing' other cultures and societies or to view its popularity as an American success story. When A Tribe Called Red, Ana Tijoux, Shadia Mansour, Lowkey, Arabian Knightz, Malikah or Narcy combine the resources of Hip Hop with the ingredients of postcolonial identity and tradition, they automatically challenge this discourse and re-root Hip Hop culture outside of its spatial origin. Materialism, drug abuse, violence and misogyny - topics that often dominate discussions about Hip Hop in North America and Europe<sup>49</sup> - are comparably marginal in the political discourses of Hip Hop in the Global South. However, the empowering quality endowed to Hip Hop by its founding myth<sup>50</sup> forms a crucial aspect of its re-creation under postcolonial, neocolonial and diasporic conditions.

During the uprisings in a series of Middle Eastern and North African countries in the beginning of 2011, Hip Hop became a powerful and convincing soundtrack as people freestyled during demonstrations, uploaded explicit videos shot during clashes in the streets to accompany their songs and were heralded by media outlets, scholars, film makers and others as agents of the revolution: Documentaries on these political developments used Hip Hop music as a soundtrack for their depiction of the events;

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<sup>47</sup> Patrick Neate, UK novelist, argued in his book *Where You're At: Notes from the Frontline of a Hip Hop Planet* (London, Bloomsberry, 2003) that "the voice of the excluded does little but reinforce their exclusion. Worse still, the success of mainstream hip hop actually deprives the excluded of the choice to express themselves or to hear beyond the appropriated exclusion which has become a bizarre sort of norm," (quoted in Mitchell, *African*, 234). This stands clearly as a valid critique against mainstream rap and the appropriation of significations of alienation and rebellion by corporate business and marketing. Nonetheless, the argument is not sufficient to proclaim the ultimate end of Hip Hop as voice from the margins, as it seems to be oblivious to the scope of Hip Hop globally, not to mention the diverse underground scene in the USA.

<sup>48</sup> As Ana Tijoux raps in "Somos Sur": "fuera yanquis de América Latina, Franceses, ingleses y holandeses, yo te quiero libre Palestina" (Get out Yankees from Latin America, French, English and Dutch, I want you Free Palestine).

<sup>49</sup> Rose, *The Hip Hop Wars*.

<sup>50</sup> I understand "myth" not as fictitious tale, but as lived reality that inhabits a normative thrust, in this case the empowerment through a rejection of the experienced marginalization, and is constantly re-created and actualized. Klein and Friedrich, *Is This Real?*, 62. See also Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, selected and translated by Anette Lavers (London: Vintage Books, 2000), 109-110.

journalists interviewed artists from the region; scholarly publications focused on the role of music acknowledged the public impact of Hip Hop, rap, and graffiti during the Arab Spring.<sup>51</sup> The musical production surrounding these historic events is impressive. In Egypt, the Arabian Knightz, MC Amin, Revolution Records and MC Deeb were among the most cited rappers addressing the revolution in their songs,<sup>52</sup> but also formerly quietist artists like Ahmed Mekky contributed to this Hip Hop “cypher” of the revolution(s).<sup>53</sup> Additionally, songs were produced as a gesture of solidarity by artists in the North American diaspora, prime among these a song featuring Narcy, Omar Offendum, Shadia Mansour, Freeway and others called “#25Jan” alluding to the Egyptian uprising’s date of inception.<sup>54</sup>

Although one should be cautious about overemphasizing the role of Hip Hop artists during the Middle Eastern und North African uprisings – which were politically and economically rather than culturally motivated and encompassed all social strata, of which the majority certainly had no relation to Hip Hop – local and regional Hip Hop scenes witnessed a remarkable boost in visibility and relevance. Many artists were able to travel and present their art to foreign audiences in the aftermath of 2011; others strengthened their politically and socially committed outlook. <sup>55</sup> Although Hip Hop practices are often romanticized by the media as popular culture originating from the “liberal” and “democratic” West, now being used by Arab youth to challenge their governments and societies in a quest for freedom and democracy – a view that must be discarded as one-sided and uninformed – they still may signify an authentic form of cultural resistance. <sup>56</sup> The continual repetition and invocation of this myth eventually

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<sup>51</sup> Aidi, *Rebel Music*, 232.

<sup>52</sup> The video to the song “Prisoner” by Arabian Knightz and featuring Shadia Mansour contains graphic material from the riots during the uprising: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=schIdC3LdLk>; MC Amin claimed that the revolution will continue with his song “El Thawra Mostamera” (The Revolution Continues): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYNy1rA\\_SsM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYNy1rA_SsM); Revolution Records, a studio as well as a crew, claim to be more than numbers with their song “Ana msh 3adad” (I’m not a Number): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oly4L50otwk>; MC Deeb demanded Egyptians to rise with “Qum Ya Misri” (Stand Up Egyptian): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIxIHjUWA\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIxIHjUWA_I) (all retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>53</sup> See Ahmed Mekky, “25 January,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vFdpKqg0wQ> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sCbpiOpLwFg> (retrieved November 15, 2016)

<sup>55</sup> The Danish NGO “Rapolitics,” for example, repeatedly invited Hip Hop artists from Egypt to take part in their workshops and organizing tours in Denmark. Rapolitics, <http://www.rapolitics.org/> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>56</sup> Robin Wright, *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion across the Islamic World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011). Robin Wright clearly overemphasizes the role of popular culture and Hip Hop prior to and during the uprisings, tracing the energy she perceives in these political movements back to an American origin. This leads to implicitly neglecting the agency of the very artists and societies she is speaking about. Arguing that “[h]ip-hop was the first voice of political opposition, even before the street protests erupted in 2011” (123) or that “hip-hop has given a new voice to young Muslims, who now dominate the faith from Morocco to Malaysia” (120), as well as “[j]ust as rap initially provided an alternative to gang violence for



leads to its realization by affirmation and belief; the myth is not mirroring the material reality, but the confirmation of its relevance leads to it becoming a social and discursive reality.

For some, however, the image of Hip Hop as a culture of resistance is so decisive that Hip Hop from the cultural spheres of the hegemon seems almost impossible. Shadia Mansour, for example, views Israeli Zionist Hip Hop as being an oxymoron, because you can't be the oppressor and authentically engage in cultural practices of the oppressed.<sup>57</sup> While this is not my argument in this paper, it still shows the potential thrust of such a claim in the GHHN, where many would agree that resistance to oppression and injustice is at the core of Hip Hop culture's normative foundation and a prerequisite for authenticity. The problem with this and other rather essentializing notions is the vagueness of central terms. Depending on points of view, social and political circumstances, economical configuration, respective public discourses *etcetera*, attributing the identities of oppressor and resistance or freedom-fighter to certain groups will be frequently contested. Considering Israel's narrative of being the sole democratic polity in a region surrounded by enemies, the role of the resistance fighter is claimed by Israeli Zionist MCs as well. The appeal of the rebels' symbol leads to its invocation in seemingly opposite contexts for opposing reasons. Indeed, the claim to be rebellious, to be the underdog, the just champion of freedom is itself a deeply cultural endeavor, as is our condoning or challenging of this claim.

### Excursus: Hip Hop and the Transregional Discourse on Islam

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young blacks in the Bronx, hip-hop has offered an alternative to suicide bombs and Molotov cocktails among Palestinians" (127) is obviously the result of cultural oversimplification and romanticizing of Hip Hop, if not outright false (Hip Hop was obviously *not* the first voice of opposition in any of the societies affected by the uprisings in 2011). Worse still, this perspective feeds the conviction that Hip Hop initiatives of the State Department from the mid-2000s would have been instrumental in sowing the seeds of revolution (Aidi, *Rebel Music*, 232), an outrageous claim considering the criticism against US foreign policy in respective Hip Hop communities (Aidi, *Rebel Music*, 250).

<sup>57</sup> Shadia Mansour made this claim on Facebook. The complete post reads: "How could you be an Israeli Zionist AND emcee at the same time? Isn't emceeing an element of Hip Hop? and isn't Hip Hop a cultural response to systematic, political and economic slavery/oppression? Im not saying being 'israeli' disallows a person from being an emcee but practicing the ideology of Zionism and channeling israeli patriotism into your music without ever mentioning the ethnic cleansing of African refugees in 'Israel' or the 200,000 Africans currently jailed in Israeli detention centres in the Negev Desert raises concerns. How can an Israeli Zionist MC consider themselves a member of Hip Hop culture when we have never heard a song highlighting the expulsion and punishment of the very people in which hip hop was created by and for? Bottom line is.... #IsraeliHipHopdoesnotexist #freepalestine" (Shadia-Mansour, April 28, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/Shadia-Mansour-35106008298/?fref=ts>).



The connections between Hip Hop and Islam have been elaborated upon in several publications, discussions and workshops before.<sup>58</sup> However, most examinations of the diverse ways the signifier Islam is comprehended have been rather cursory. In regard to the relevance of Islam concerning the origin and normative structure of US Hip Hop culture, rather specific images will be associated with the term, such as Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam and the Black Power movement. Considering Islam's role in Hip Hop's emergence and formation within the context of US-American culture as well as its role in reconnecting African Americans to their supposedly original religious zeal and reminding them of their cultural heritage, observers may be tempted to deem the migration of cultural practices infused with these forms of "Islamic" credentials as a reverse importation of Islam, or of a specific strand of it, to the Middle East.<sup>59</sup> While the Nation of Islam's or the Nation of Gods and Earth's (Five Percenter) philosophy and theology may have a certain effect on the belief system of Hip Hop adherents in countries of Muslim majorities, this particular fan base seems much more prone to view "its" Islam as the foundation of these tenets. Rather than being influenced by "Hip Hop's official religion," they take comfort in viewing it as their cultural and religious contribution to Hip Hop's origin.<sup>60</sup>

The Syrian duo Black Bannerz allude in their name to the Abbasids, a dynasty that ruled the expanding Islamic empire from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, epitomizing Arabic prowess and an age of great progress in the sciences and arts. The point of reference is, thus, the historical period that signifies the pinnacle of the Arabic-Islamic civilization. They complete their politico-religious outlook with individual stage names, calling themselves Holywar and S.O.T.A. (Slave Of The Almighty).<sup>61</sup> In this context, it's especially noteworthy that, although they mostly rap in Modern Standard Arabic—a variant perceived as a sophisticated dialect of the elite and used by international media outlets such as Al Jazeera—the Black Bannerz have given themselves a name using American vernacular popularized through Hip Hop, in this particular case American English with a "z" instead of the standard plural "s." These seeming contradictions point to the complex configuration of Hip Hop in a globalized world, in which a multitude of cultural influences converge with political and social discourses that are not confined by

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<sup>58</sup> Daulatzai, *Black Star*; Aidi, *Rebel Music*; Alim, *Roc the Mic*; and Juan M. Floyd-Thomas, "A Jihad of Words: The Evolution of African-American Islam and Contemporary Hip-Hop" in Anthony B. Pinn (ed.), *Noise and Spirit*, 49-69, (New York and London: New York University Press, 2003) are but a few examples.

<sup>59</sup> Bader al-Saif, "American Muslim Rap: Reverse Exportation of Islam to the Middle East" (paper presented at the conference Trans-L-Encounters, Religious Education and Islamic Popular Culture in Asia and the Middle East, University of Marburg, Germany, May 2016). In his presentation, he argued that Islamic motifs in US Hip Hop were conducive for a changed perception of religion and religiosity by Hip Hop communities in the Middle East.

<sup>60</sup> Journalist Harry Allen in 1991, quoted in Alim, *Roc the Mic*, 22.

<sup>61</sup> For more information visit their Facebook and YouTube profiles:  
[https://www.facebook.com/BlackBannerz/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/BlackBannerz/about/?ref=page_internal) and  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/BlackBannerz> (both retrieved November 15, 2016).

geographical frontiers and thus enable practitioners to engage in cross-regional and global communication. Of course, misunderstandings or false interpretations may abound in this context. In a move that shook several Western critics, the Tunisian MC El General published the song “Allahu Akbar” (God is Great) shortly after the Tunisian revolution and deposing of former President Ben Ali, expressing in the lyrics his wish to die as a martyr in the fight for Islam.<sup>62</sup> The lyrics utilize the vocabulary of fundamentalists in active warfare against the West or America much more than they reflect on religiosity in the way done by artists such as Gang Starr, Rakim, Yasiin Bey or Jay Electronica—US artists and adherents of either the Nation of Islam, the Five Percenters, or Sunni Islam. El General, previously judged by *Time* magazine as being one of the one hundred most influential people in 2011, subsequently lost his image as champion of a “democratic and secular” revolution, an image that Western audiences had enthusiastically bestowed upon him after his song “Rais LeBled” had widely been perceived as a revolutionary battle cry.<sup>63</sup>

The trait of being a Muslim or adhering to Islam can signify different things in the context of cultural practices such as Hip Hop. Expressing one's belief in its terms is just one of many more alternatives. In specific social, cultural, and political discourses, expressions of a “Muslim” identity may signify commonality or difference, it may act as an inclusive force or an indication of some exclusivity; what it accomplishes must be determined with regard to the relevant public discourse and cannot be taken out of context without altering its meaning. The aforementioned song, “Allahu Akbar” by El General, can be perceived as a form of “singing back” against hegemonic pressures emanating from the Western hemisphere and infringing upon the motivations and goals of the region's protesters by strongly imposing a specific path to democratic polity (by using the European model) upon them. In a comparable move, the Egyptian rapper Sphinx confirmed his decidedly cultural—as opposed to strictly religious—identity to be Muslim in a song called “Muslim”<sup>64</sup> following the online-release of a low budget movie ridiculing the prophet Muhammad and sparking violent protests across the region in late

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<sup>62</sup> A version of the corresponding video with English subtitles can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1QhfyKQsj0> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

<sup>63</sup> The song “Rais LeBled” addresses the then-current president of Tunisia and accuses him of ignoring the population's dire situation, becoming an anthem of the Tunisian Revolution. The video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IeGfJ7OouR0> with English subtitles (retrieved November 15, 2016). The German newspaper *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* published an interview with El General under the headline “Generation Revolte: Der tunesische Polit-Rapper El General über Jugendproteste, Facebook und Islam” (Generation Revolt: The Tunisian Political Rapper El General on Youth Protest, Facebook, and Islam), treating him as a spokesperson of his generation. Jonathan Fischer and Reem Ensslen (translator), “Generation Revolte: Der tunesische Polit-Rapper El General über Jugendproteste, Facebook und Islam,” *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, no. 44, November 23, 2011, p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DChSzksTbXI> (retrieved November 15, 2016).

2012.<sup>65</sup> In this particular case, I argue that identifying oneself as being Muslim must be culturally and socially understood, considering how just a few days before the song was released, Sphinx claimed to be non-religious and that religion and religiosity play no significant role in his artistic expressions.<sup>66</sup> The song and his claim are still not as discrepant or contradictory as one might be led to believe. Rather, the context is crucial: Sphinx was not referring to his personal beliefs. Instead, he was engaging in a cross-regional and cross-cultural public discourse in which he saw the religion of his social surroundings vilified and misunderstood, leading him to proclaim—rapping in English—that he, too, is part of the corresponding cultural circle, and not by coincidence, but openly and proudly. For Sphinx, religion in itself was not the central feature in this discourse; the power to create words, images, and meanings and the empowerment of those who were being ridiculed was.

### Concluding Remarks

Hip Hop is a phenomenal culture containing practices whose global spread and appeal are unparalleled. The visibility and relevance of Hip Hop is staggering, as can be seen not only by examining different Hip Hop communities and their cultural and artistic activities but also by considering the genre's reverberations on societies as is reflected in the amount and quality of Hip Hop scholarship and media. While most of these publications are mainly focused on phenomena related to the broad community of North American Hip Hop and mainstream rap, this essay set out to examine aspects of researching a trans-national Hip Hop tribe delineated by a common set of aesthetic, artistic and discursive features. By utilizing the practices of Hip Hop and accentuating the rebellious and empowering quality inherent in its founding myth, these artists are able to use Hip Hop to engage in a global cultural communication. Going against hegemonic narratives of the so-called civilized West vs. the barbaric East, of rational and secular democracies vs. ignorant or fanatically religious societies ruled by autocrats, Hip Hop artists remind us of the reverberations of colonialism and the continued relevance and impact of global white supremacy. Through their music and their aesthetics, the artists spoken of above reflect on what they perceive to be injustices and essentialisms in - as well as symptoms of - a complex net of exploitation, war and crisis on a global scale. If we understand Hip Hop as a cultural response to racism, colonization and oppression, then the Global South represents the zeal of the culture from a global perspective

In our discussion about the culture of Hip Hop, its relevance, its role in and for society, its lyrical and aesthetical contents, we should constantly remind ourselves of the

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<sup>65</sup> Chris Stephen, Eileen Byrne and Peter Beaumont, "Controversial Film Sparks Protests and Violence across the Muslim World," *The Guardian*, September 14, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/14/islam-film-muslim-protests>

<sup>66</sup> Hesham Abed, personal conversation with author, September 20, 2012.

existence of a plethora of tribes, subgroups and local or international communities that might not be included by using restricted attributions, fetishizing, demonizing or strictly circumscribing the genre's structures and forms in an attempt to exhaustively capture its scope and reality. The allegiance to a specific understanding of Hip Hop as a culture often emerges from interpreting the content of practices and art-forms without acknowledging that the decoding process is neither necessarily correct, nor does it have to be an exhaustive account of the artists' reflections on a given subject or meta-narrative. A thorough contextualization, historiography and sufficient theoretical framework are necessary to arrive at satisfactory delineations and definitions; even so, the scrutinized culture will most certainly expose a new facet previously not taken into account. To make things more complex, our position as scholars will have to be questioned repeatedly in the process, as academia itself is replete with specific cultural practices, myths, signs and symbols that inform our daily conduct and intellectual productivity and is by no means free from inherent power-relationships. This, in turn, informs not only our daily conduct and life-world, but may lead to flaws in our research agenda and our use of key terms.

As for the conundrum dealt with in this essay, it is not enough to limit the scope of spatiality in Hip Hop – or, for that matter, culture generally – as lingering along the confines of strictly geographical or political constructs. To be clear, those dimensions naturally have an impact on artistic and cultural production and practice. But to ascribe geographical adjectives to cultural practice may also lead to simplifications that limit our ability to comprehend fully what we observe. Notwithstanding the potential importance of the local, national, regional, or global environment envisioned through cultural practice, the readiness to attach labels like Egyptian rap or Chilean Hip Hop, along with the notorious understanding of Hip Hop from the USA as a sort of default mode, inhibit more creative ways of understanding Hip Hop communities and networks. This is especially the case when Hip Hop communities in close proximity (e.g. in the same city, region, or state) showcase extremely diverging ways of dealing with the aesthetics and meanings of the cultural practices. An affirmation of the local and the global as constitutive for Hip Hop today does not have to incorporate geographical entities to be authentic. Instead, Hip Hop culture itself, its myths, narratives, and practices can be constructed as “the local.” This locality consists of a multitude of Hip Hop communities whose aesthetic and discursive form endows its members with a sense of belonging and identity. The instability and fluidity of signifying systems hints at the ever-changing nature of culture and may be perceived as comparably soft arena for identification. It is, however, culture that determines our understanding of spatial dimensions, which means that it is not the state that is producing national culture; rather, the state itself – and the state-centric view still very much prevalent in academia, including Hip Hop studies – is a product of culture. While culture created nationalism and the state, its general ambiguousness and fluidity implies that it does not remain in its confines. Concurrently, Hip Hop cannot be bracketed, labelled and essentialized; it rose as set of practices that were distinctly urban and American but has since acquired a much more complex identity.

In the end, we don't have to—because we literally can't—arrive at a static definition of Hip Hop as a culture. Instead, we must acknowledge that Hip Hop can be the “cultural arm of predatory capitalism” and that it can uplift society, that it can be exploited for secondary petty goals by politicians and effectively empower marginalized communities through reiteration of its rebellious posture.<sup>67</sup> The picture we get of the culture as a whole, when taking into consideration the global and international scope of Hip Hop, is not as bleak as one might expect. That Hip Hop continues to be a force to reckon with in public discourses is demonstrated not only by the recent revival of the Black Power discourse and the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, where a series of artists, both mainstream and underground, contributed through lyrical and aesthetic interventions; it can also be witnessed in the discourse touched upon in this essay. While visual and acoustic reminders of the 1960s make a clear political statement in the context of movements like Black Lives Matter—based as it is on the criticism of the embarrassingly prevalent racism in the US—, similar references can be found in the cultural products and practices of artists from what is called the Global South, reminding us of the embarrassingly unresolved problem of colonialism in the past and present as well as its reverberations on local communities and global discourses.

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<sup>67</sup> Tricia Rose referencing “mainstream American Hip Hop” at the Google vs. Debate, “Hip hop on Trial,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3-7Y0xG89Q> (at 36:10, retrieved November 15, 2016).

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

#### No. 8: The Dame of Liberty

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

Our towers scrape the sky;  
Their roofs ascend on high;  
And so high should our rating be,  
As the people of liberty.

**Chorus:** And we've raised before the sea  
The Dame of Liberty:  
A gorgeous gift that seems to be  
A taunt for folks like me.

*To be rapped or sung,  
the other stanzas rapped*

But she's a torchbearer for real,  
Shining her light for us to see  
How we all need to heal  
From the wounds of slavery.

*Repeat chorus.*

Yes, I lived in her land of the free,  
And wondered, "What's in it for me?"  
I thought of her freedom's bounty,  
And wondered when my share would be.

*Repeat chorus.*

And, yes, our hope to be free remains  
Distant for their unseen chains.

"Give me liberty, or give me death!<sup>1</sup>"  
I cried out, and they gave me death.

*Repeat chorus.*

And that's how our nation stumbles,  
Its deeds against its beliefs;  
Yes, that's how she stumbles,  
Among our many griefs.

*Repeat chorus.*

Our lives remain dark or in the shadow;  
Our prospects are still dim or shallow;  
In this land of life we can hardly breathe;  
To the cradle of our freedom our nation brought a wreath.

*Repeat chorus.*

Great Dame of Liberty,  
Towering before the sea,  
When will your torch we all see  
Shine for folks like me?

*Repeat chorus.*

February 27, 2018

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<sup>1</sup> "Give me liberty, or give me death!" is a quotation from a speech delivered by Patrick Henry, an American attorney, orator and planter, to the Second Virginia Convention on March 23, 1775, at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia.

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## **“I Got the Mics On, My People Speak”: On the Rise of Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop**

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*Rhyan Clapham and Benjamin Kelly*

### **Abstract**

In this paper, an Aboriginal rapper and settler-Australian Indigenous Studies lecturer collaborate to provide an overview of the Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop scene. We contextualize the development of Aboriginal Hip Hop as part of a long postcolonial tradition of Aboriginal engagement with Black transnationalism. By analysing rap lyrics, Hip Hop videos, and related commentary, we demonstrate the ways in which Aboriginal hip hoppers have adapted elements of Hip Hop culture to suit their own cultures, histories, and structural position as a colonized minority under the rule of a modern settler-colonial state. We conclude by considering Aboriginal engagement with Hip Hop culture as part of the ongoing development of Aboriginal cultures in an era of globalization.

## Introduction

From the Bronx to the bush, via the Block at the heart of Aboriginal Sydney, the sounds, style, and substance of Hip Hop have been resonating with Aboriginal Australia for over three decades. With each year, the Aboriginal Hip Hop community grows stronger. This paper is the outcome of collaboration between an Aboriginal rapper and a settler-Australian Indigenous Studies lecturer. Monica R. Miller, Daniel White Hodge, Jeffrey Coleman, and Cassandra D. Chaney have noted that just as Hip Hop itself “has developed into a trans-global phenomenon,” scholarship on Hip Hop has made its way into a diversity of academic disciplines.<sup>1</sup> Here, we draw on the discipline of Australian Indigenous Studies to demonstrate the ways in which Aboriginal hip hoppers have adapted elements of Hip Hop culture to suit their own cultures, histories, and structural position as a colonized minority under the rule of a modern settler-colonial state.

On one level, Aboriginal Hip Hop can be understood through Halifu Osumare’s concept of “connective marginalities.”<sup>2</sup> Osumare describes connective marginalities as “social resonances between black expressive culture within its contextual political history and similar dynamics in other nations.”<sup>3</sup> Many Aboriginal rappers have commented on the resonance of American Hip Hop with their own experience. Yolngu rapper Baker Boy recently made this point when he told an interviewer of his early experience of Hip Hop: “I could relate to the struggles when it comes to community life.”<sup>4</sup> In this paper, however, we argue that the relationship between Aboriginal people and Hip Hop runs deeper than contemporary connective marginalities.

We seek to provide an overview of Aboriginal Hip Hop contextualized as a recent manifestation of a longer tradition of Aboriginal engagement with transnational Black discourses and culture including Garveyism, blues, reggae, and Black Power. As with other manifestations of this tradition, Aboriginal hip hoppers have adapted elements of the culture for their own purposes. Conversely, Aboriginal Hip Hop sees the adaptation of pre- and post-invasion Aboriginal traditions to suit the form and style of a now globalized Hip Hop culture.

## A Connective Marginality

Aboriginal Australian communities share many historical and political circumstances with African American communities. Both have been subject to a history of racist oppression and face enduring systematic discrimination and structural

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<sup>1</sup> Monica R. Miller, Daniel White Hodge, Jeffrey Coleman, and Cassandra D. Chaney, “The Hip in Hip Hop: Toward a Discipline of Hip Hop Studies,” *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 6.

<sup>2</sup> Halifu Osumare, “Beat Streets in the Global Hood: Connective Marginalities of the Hip Hop Globe,” *The Journal of American Culture* 24, no. 1–2 (2001): 171–181.

<sup>3</sup> Osumare, “Beat Streets in the Global Hood,” 172.

<sup>4</sup> Tamara Howie, “Arnhem Land Rapper Danzal Baker Making Impact on Australian Music Scene,” *NT News*, July 16, 2017.



disadvantage. Both are racial minorities subject to the rule of white-dominated, settler-colonial, democratic states. While these broad similarities have allowed for the development of a sense of shared struggle between Aboriginal and African American peoples, we do not wish to overstate their equivalence. The political circumstances of Aboriginal Australians are, of course, specific to their own histories and status as a colonized indigenous minority.

Since 1788, when the British empire invaded the Dharug Aboriginal Nation (where the city of Sydney now stands), Aboriginal peoples have been subject to a litany of settler-colonial policies, technologies, and practices that have sought to clear the way for colonial and national expansion. In the broadest and crudest of terms, this has included: frontier massacres;<sup>5</sup> legislation designed to contain them on missions and reserves, where their languages and ceremonies were forbidden;<sup>6</sup> exploitative labour arrangements;<sup>7</sup> and the removal of children from their families, at least partly to desocialize them as Aboriginal.<sup>8</sup> Since the mid-1990s, the neoliberal turn in Australian Indigenous affairs policy has brought a renewed, if disguised, governmental interest in the assimilation—now rebranded as “mainstreaming” or “normalisation”—of Indigenous peoples.<sup>9</sup>

The colonies, and later the state of Australia, were founded on the notion of *terra nullius*—that they were legally unoccupied prior to British colonization. The British Crown did not recognize the sovereignty, law, or property of the over two hundred Indigenous nations that occupied the entire continent. It was not until the 1992 *Mabo* High Court decision that the existence of any Native title to land was acknowledged by settler-colonial authorities. The sovereignty and law of Indigenous Australian peoples, past or present, have yet to be formally acknowledged by the settler-colonial state.

Of course, Indigenous Australians have asserted their own individual and collective agency throughout the post-invasion history of the continent. They have done so not only by resisting colonialism, but by drawing on the various forms of knowledge, tradition, and technology available to them in particular historical moments and social and geographic locations. In the contemporary historical moment, this includes the

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Reynolds, *The Law of the Land* (Camberwell: Penguin, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Bain Attwood, *The Making of the Aborigines* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> Ann Curthoys and Clive Moore, “Working for the White People: An Historiographic Essay on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Labour,” *Labour History* 69 (1995): 1–29.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Read, “How Many Separated Aboriginal Children?” *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 49 (2003): 155–163.

<sup>9</sup> Aileen Moreton-Robinson, “Imagining the Good Indigenous Citizen: Race War and the Pathology of Patriarchal White Sovereignty,” *History, Power, Text: Cultural Studies and Indigenous Studies* (2014): 310–330.

relatively new traditions of Hip Hop culture. Martin N. Nakata describes such processes as happening at the “Cultural Interface.”<sup>10</sup>

The concept of the cultural interface was developed in order to highlight the complexities and tensions that emerge when Indigenous and non-Indigenous systems of knowledge converge. It seeks to circumvent the effects of binary thinking and the authenticity dilemmas that often follow. The cultural interface is a contested space of shifting intersections between different people, traditions, histories, experiences, and agendas. As Nakata explains, it is a space of possibilities as well as constraints:

People act in these spaces, drawing on their own understandings of what is emerging all around them, drawing on collective understanding, drawing on historical ways of understanding. All these sets of understandings may themselves draw from many different and/or contested points of understanding, including those that derive from traditional knowledge, from Western knowledge, from previous experience of the intersections between them and so on. In this process people are constantly producing new ways of understanding and at the same time filtering out elements of all those ways of understanding that prevent them from making sense at a particular point in time and trying in the process to preserve a particular sense of self or, in the case of collective efforts, a particular sense of community, always itself a subject of ongoing discussion and ongoing change.<sup>11</sup>

Over the last three decades, Hip Hop has emerged as a potent medium for Aboriginal youth to make sense of, and express, their sense of self and community as a colonized minority in a globalizing world. As we argue in the following section, Aboriginal engagement with Hip Hop is best understood as a recent manifestation of a much longer tradition of cultural exchange between Aboriginal and Afro-diasporic peoples.

### **An Aboriginal Tradition of Transnational Cultural Exchange**

Cultural and political exchange between African American and Aboriginal Australian peoples precedes the rise of Aboriginal Hip Hop by almost a century. African American and Afro-diasporic thinkers were influential in the development of Aboriginal activism from the early twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> Blues, funk, soul, and reggae music have inspired Aboriginal musicians for many generations.<sup>13</sup> This has been facilitated, in part, by a sense of shared struggle against racism and White oppression. Post-invasion Aboriginal identity has been constructed partially through a dialogue with Black cultural forms and political issues that are transnational.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Martin N. Nakata, *Disciplining the Savages, Savaging the Disciplines* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Nakata, *Disciplining the Savages*, 199–201.

<sup>12</sup> John Maynard, *Fight for Liberty and Freedom: The Origins of Australian Aboriginal Activism* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007), 18–34.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Dunbar-Hall and Chris Gibson, *Deadly Sounds, Deadly Places* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Dunbar-Hall and Gibson, *Deadly Sounds*, 120.

John Maynard traces the first significant instance of transnational Black influence on Aboriginal political mobilization to the foundation of the Coloured Progressive Association in 1903.<sup>15</sup> Aboriginal leaders such as Fred Maynard, Tom Lacey, Dick Johnson, and Sid Ridgeway propelled Black activism into the 1920s, when, through engagements with African American seamen on the docks of Sydney, they gained knowledge of the work of thinkers including Marcus Garvey, Frederick Douglas, and W. E. B. Du Bois among others.<sup>16</sup> This early transnational history is occasionally celebrated in Aboriginal Hip Hop, for instance Darah's (2012) lyric in "Australian History 101": "1900s on missions had us living like prison, in the 20s we studied Garvey's Black Nationalism."

The Black connection continued into the mid-1920s, when Australia launched its own branch of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). It was renamed the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA) in 1925 but continued to incorporate much of Garvey's philosophy. Fred Maynard was elected president of the association and was heavily influenced by the work of Garvey and the UNIA. Maynard and Tom Lacey studied the ideology of the UNIA and understood Aboriginal-specific issues in relation to the international struggles of Black peoples.<sup>17</sup>

Similar political organizations emerged throughout the 1920s and 1930s, such as Victorian Australian Aborigines League and the New South Wales Aborigines Progressive Association. During the 1960s, Aboriginal activists drew on the language and ideas of the African diasporic freedom struggle in order to connect their own struggles to a more global movement.<sup>18</sup> In 1965, Charles Perkins led a group of students from the University of Sydney on a bus tour—dubbed the "freedom rides"—of regional New South Wales to expose the racism and segregation practiced there.<sup>19</sup> From the late 1960s, an Australian Black Power movement emerged in Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane.<sup>20</sup> It gained momentum after Dr. Roosevelt Brown gave a public talk at the invitation of the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League in Melbourne in 1968. The movement drew

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<sup>15</sup> John Maynard, "In the interests of our people': The Influence of Garveyism on the Rise of Australian Aboriginal Political Activism," *Aboriginal History* 29 (2005): 2.

<sup>16</sup> Maynard, "'In the interests of our people,'" 11.

<sup>17</sup> Maynard, "'In the interests of our people,'" 12.

<sup>18</sup> For a full description of the African diasporic freedom struggle during the 1960s which entails African diasporic peoples around the world unified against white supremacist practices see Michael O. West, William G. Martin, Fanon Che Wilkins, eds., *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Ann Curthoys, *Freedom Ride: A Freedom Rider Remembers* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> Gary Foley, "Black Power in Redfern, 1968–1972," essay on Gary Foley's website, accessed 17 December 2015, <[http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/essay\\_1.html](http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/essays/essay_1.html)>.

heavily on the works of Malcolm X, Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, George Jackson, Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, and Frantz Fanon.<sup>21</sup>

### The Emergence of Aboriginal Hip Hop

Aboriginal musicians have also found inspiration in African American and Afro-diasporic traditions for many generations. As Cameron White demonstrates, the politically charged genre of reggae has had a particularly powerful influence on the Aboriginal music scene.<sup>22</sup> Reggae presented a musical manifestation of transnational blackness, resistance, and style. Its influence is evident in the language and musical style of pioneering Aboriginal Hip Hop groups such as CuzCo and Local Knowledge as well as more recent artists such as Baker Boy.

Given the history of Hip Hop culture as a platform of expression for the marginalized and voiceless, as well as the shared heritage of Black nationalist and Black Power discourses that influenced the evolution of rap, it was a matter of course that Aboriginal youth would be drawn to Hip Hop culture and establish its place in an Australian context.<sup>23</sup> Evoking Osumare's concept of connective marginalities, Wire MC describes the common Aboriginal sense of a shared struggle with African Americans:<sup>24</sup>

Black America and Black Australia have a connection for one main fundamental reason: White hatred. White racism. That's how far back the connection goes ... It was a slave's voice, it was a poor man's voice. It was a hungry child's voice, you know, and we could relate to that voice, we could hear that voice. 'Cause we had them same voices in our own communities, in our lands. And this is the original song of Hip Hop.<sup>25</sup>

The power and image of politically charged rap groups from the late 1980s held a particular appeal for many Aboriginal youths in Australia. Aboriginal rapper BrothaBlack of South West Syndicate recalls imitating Chuck D of Public Enemy in his youth.<sup>26</sup> Aboriginal rapper Lez "Bex" Beckett from Cunnamulla details seeing African American rappers on his television screen at a young age:

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<sup>21</sup> Foley, "Black Power in Redfern."

<sup>22</sup> Cameron White, "'Rapper on a Rampage': Theorising the Political Significance of Aboriginal Australian Hip Hop and Reggae," *Transforming Cultures eJournal* 4 (2009), 108–130, <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/TfC/article/viewArticle/1070>.

<sup>23</sup> Ernest Allen, "Making the Strong Survive: The Contours and Contradictions of Message Rap," in *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture*, ed. William Eric Perkins (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996): 159–191.

<sup>24</sup> Osumare, "Beat Streets in the Global Hood."

<sup>25</sup> Grant Leigh Saunders, *B.L.A.C.K.: An Aboriginal Song of Hip Hop* (Australian Film Television and Radio School, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Tony Mitchell, "The New Corroboree," *Meanjin: New writing in Australia* 65 (2006), 20.

Before Australian and Aboriginal hip-hop really took off, we [Aboriginal youth] all followed what the Americans did. It really influenced me because it was a black face on the television, and when you are a young fulla growing up in Cunnamulla in central Queensland, it is a pride thing to see another blackfella in a position of power.<sup>27</sup>

For many, N.W.A. was the epitome of Black Power in music, a force to be reckoned with. Wire MC talks of their most controversial hit:

What really grabbed my attention was N.W.A. saying 'Fuck the police!' ... groups like N.W.A. were saying things that we wanted to say but were afraid to say because of the past history between our people and police.<sup>28</sup>

And elsewhere:

I could really relate to Ice Cube [of N.W.A.]. Like me, he was an angry young black man, but he was very intellectual about it and he was telling his reality which was removed from my reality, but there were parallels, you know, a black man speaking out about the white oppressor.<sup>29</sup>

Gangsta rap also appealed to a young Briggs in school. Ice Cube quickly became his favourite rapper, and he jumped at any opportunity to spend time listening to his music:

At school, we had like a reading post. I'd be like, "I finished my work! Can I go in the reading post?" 'Cause they had better headphones. And I'd go in there and I'd put on my Ice Cube tape and sit in with my book and just flip through it. And they must have thought I was the best reader.<sup>30</sup>

In 2010, Briggs achieved a position in Ice Cube's Australian tour as a supporting act, a remarkable moment for a fresh MC in the Australian Hip Hop scene.

Tony Mitchell identifies 1982 as the year of Aboriginal Hip Hop's birth, and Munkimuk as its founding father.<sup>31</sup> In the early 1980s, the Hip Hop pioneer would catch the train from south-west Sydney to the Sydney Opera House in Circular Quay, carrying a roll of linoleum over his shoulder.<sup>32</sup> He would then throw down his linoleum and breakdance for hours with his friends, attracting crowds of Sydney-siders and tourists. Hip hoppers also instigated "rap jams" in Circular Quay, complete with DJs and MCs, which attracted large groups of Aboriginal and Lebanese Australians.<sup>33</sup> DJs would find

<sup>27</sup> Dunbar-Hall and Gibson, *Deadly Sounds*, 123.

<sup>28</sup> White "Rapper on a Rampage," 110.

<sup>29</sup> Dunbar-Hall and Gibson, *Deadly Sounds*, 128.

<sup>30</sup> "Briggs," ABC Online Indigenous Programs - Message Stick, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/messagestick/stories/s3532287.htm>. ABC has archived the show but the episode with the documentary on Briggs can be watched on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3rlm9UqNoI>. "Briggs on Message Stick," YouTube, posted by Aboriginal Rap, October 29, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3rlm9UqNoI>.

<sup>31</sup> Mitchell, "The New Corroboree."

<sup>32</sup> "Munkimuk" *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk About Their Music and Country*, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.realtalkthebook.com/home/munkimuk>.

<sup>33</sup> "Munkimuk," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*.



any source of power to connect their turntables and congregate with breakdancers and MCs. According to Ward's history, whenever MunkiMuk's "friends found a power point they could tap, the breaking jams grew huge – and started to be raided by the police. To avoid the heat, the jams moved to Martin Place and started attracting thousands of people every weekend."<sup>34</sup> In this way, early Australian Hip Hop echoed the kind of urban mobility outlined in Tricia Rose's account of early American Hip Hop.<sup>35</sup>

As had been the case in the American Hip Hop scene, early Australian Hip Hop involved racialized contests over access to public space.<sup>36</sup> MunkiMuk recalls a police raid in the early 1980s:

Then the cops shut the whole thing and it turned into a riot because – you know, coppers turning up, all guns blazing ... The next day in the newspaper they called it "Ethnic riots in Sydney CBD" with no explanation of what was going on or whether it had anything to do with anything. You know how the media put their spin on a thing. So they kind of shut that down.<sup>37</sup>

Since then, Munk has gone on to educate youth and communities, both in urban and rural areas, on the power of Hip Hop. Munk founded the *Indij Hip Hop Show* on Koori Radio in 2007, based on the *Hip Hop Show* broadcast by Triple J (the national public youth radio station), but more specifically for Indigenous Australian rappers and rap groups who would otherwise not gain radio airplay. By then, Munk had already appeared on the *Hip Hop Show* as well as on Koori Radio on numerous occasions. He recalls the moment the idea came to him to develop a platform for Indigenous rappers:

For years, all these young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rappers have been giving me their demos – and guess what? They're sitting in my room doing nothing. So what I want to do is do a show, and I'm just gonna play 'em. That's it. I've got enough there to go for months!<sup>38</sup>

Munk stepped down as the regular host for the *Indij Hip Hop Show* in September 2014 but the *Indij Hip Hop Show* remains strong in staff, music, and fan base.

By the 1990s, commercialised, globally distributed rap music had gained notoriety for its supposed imagery of violent posturing, machismo, misogyny, and materialism. The gangsta image appealed to Australian and Aboriginal audiences. Initial opinions were reactionary in response to Hip Hop's ever-growing popularity in Australia, with politician Peter Costello referring it as a sign of the moral decline of Australian youth.<sup>39</sup> Australian authorities have attempted (and at times succeeded) to prevent American

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<sup>34</sup> "Munkimuk," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*.

<sup>35</sup> Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 51.

<sup>36</sup> Rose, *Black Noise*, 40.

<sup>37</sup> "Munkimuk," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*.

<sup>38</sup> "Munkimuk," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*.

<sup>39</sup> Mitchell, "The New Corroboree," 21.



rappers such as Eminem and 50 Cent from entering the country on the basis of bad character.<sup>40</sup>

Initially, many Aboriginal Elders feared the influence of gangsta rap and considered Hip Hop a destructive influence on the youth.<sup>41</sup> Now, after many successful Hip Hop workshops facilitated by rappers Wire MC and Morganics, Jimblah, and MunkiMuk among others, many Aboriginal communities and Elders have come to embrace the educational potential of rap music and Hip Hop culture. Wire explains:

Sure [Elders] have that preconceived idea that that's what Hip Hop is ... So people in my community are like I don't want my grandson or my little nephew being like them niggaz and you know calling women bitches and think life's all about money. And then we'll do our workshops and then old women in the community, Aunties, tell me, 'I really like what you're doing. You showed me Hip Hop is more than what I thought it was.'<sup>42</sup>

The more controversial themes of rap music such as misogyny, violence, drug use, and materialistic braggadocio are relatively absent from the Aboriginal Hip Hop scene. This has mostly been due to Hip Hop workshop facilitators and positive role model MCs like Wire, MunkiMuk, and Baker Boy. Such workshops typically draw more on the tradition of "message rap" and use it as a medium to disseminate an education of self-expression for disenfranchised and disadvantaged young people across all ethnic backgrounds.<sup>43</sup> When comparing Aboriginal rap to mainstream Australian rap, Aboriginal rappers work with an "innate sense of community obligation," as Wire MC elaborates:

The difference I find between Aboriginal Hip Hop and white Australian Hip Hop [is that] we have a deep sense of community obligation, we are born with it, and that's why you don't hear black MC's—I can say all of the ones I've come across—using words like "bitches," they won't diss women. Because my mum isn't a bitch, my grandma isn't a bitch, and the mother the land ain't a bitch.<sup>44</sup>

Although Hip Hop's journey from America to Aboriginal Australia evolved at a gradual pace, it has now established a thriving culture of Aboriginal breakdancers, DJs, MCs, and aerosol artists. Hip Hop has become an established element of post-invasion Aboriginal culture and is being creatively explored by a great number of Aboriginal artists.

### Aboriginalizing Hip Hop

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<sup>40</sup> Stavrias, "Droppin' Conscious Beats and Flows," 44.

<sup>41</sup> Stavrias, "Droppin' Conscious Beats and Flows," 50.

<sup>42</sup> Stavrias, "Droppin' Conscious Beats and Flows," 50.

<sup>43</sup> Mitchell, "The New Corroboree," 21.

<sup>44</sup> Tony Mitchell, "Blackfellas Rapping, Breaking and Writing: A Short History of Aboriginal Hip Hop," *Aboriginal History* 30 (2006): 136.

In this section of the article, we seek to demonstrate how artists working at the cultural interface have brought Aboriginal and Hip Hop traditions together to create Aboriginal styles of Hip Hop and Hip Hop styles of aboriginality. In pursuit of this objective, we analyze the lyricism, musicality, and videography of publicly released Aboriginal Hip Hop tracks, supplemented by published interviews with artists. Our analysis is structured around two exemplary music videos: Briggs's 2015 "The Children Came Back" and Baker Boy's 2017 "Could 9."

In 2015 Briggs released "The Children Came Back" to champion Black excellence and highlight the Indigenous Australian achievements since the celebrated Aboriginal blues singer Archie Roach released "Took the Children Away" in 1990.<sup>45</sup> Lyrically, most striking feature of the song is Briggs's reference to a myriad of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander icons in sports, music, politics and his own immediate family. For example:

[Verse 1]

*I'm Fitzroy where the stars be, I'm Wanganeen in '93  
I'm Mundine, I'm Cathy Free-man, that fire inside-a-me  
I'm Adam Goodes, and Adam should be applauded when he stand up  
You can look to us when that time stop I'm Patty Mills with the last shot*

*I'm Gurrumul, I'm Archie, I'm everything you ask me  
I'm everything you can't be, I'm the dead hearts, heart beat*

Throughout the song a theme is established as the leaders and heroes mentioned are identified *as* Briggs. Briggs identifies himself as Aboriginal sporting heroes such as NBA player Patty Mills and Australian Rules Football icon Gavin Wanganeen, music legends such as Jimmy Little and Archie Roach, political leaders such as Doug Nicholls and William Cooper, as Yorta Yorta country such as "the sand hills on Cummera" and "the carvings outta every scar tree," as an urban Aboriginal community (Fitzroy, Melbourne), and as his own family and community, citing various uncles and other Briggs's as well as "Rumba" (an Aboriginal Australian Rules Football team based in his home town of Shepparton). This establishes a pan-Aboriginal motif that expands out from Briggs himself, through his family and Yorta Yorta nation and country, to identify all Aboriginal people as a whole. Aboriginality becomes the persona of the song.

Such use of lyricism to discursively strengthen Aboriginal identity and community is common in Aboriginal Hip Hop. This is often made manifest in collaboration. For example, the closing track on MunkiMuk's album *Renegades of Munk*, entitled "The Last Word," is a colossal twelve-minute collaboration with thirty-five Indigenous and non-Indigenous Hip Hop artists. The entire project is based on the musical rubric of the Hip Hop cypher. Rappers take turns featuring on "The Last Word,"

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<sup>45</sup> "Briggs," ABC Online.

some rapping for eight bars, others for sixteen. The most notable appearances are among the likes of Naomi Wenitong (The Last Kinection), Nooky, Jimblah, and Birdz, as well as Aboriginal Hip Hop pioneers Big Naz (South West Syndicate), Deekay (Native Ryme) and Rival MC (Impossible Odds). The song exists as a cultural gathering and a combination of youth and Elder members of the Aboriginal Hip Hop community. Most rappers “give props” to MunkiMuk on the track, paying respect to Munk by acknowledging him in their individual verses:

*[Verse 3: Deekay]*

*From Redfern to Brisbane, can't help but listen  
It's MunkiMuk, Deekay in a spit of wisdom*

*[Verse 4: Mistery]*

*I'm hailing here from Sydney  
South West is the area I'm bringin' Munki with me  
Like Michael Jackson rappin'...*

*[Verse 5: Nooky]*

*10 Years Too Late [Munk's 2005 EP] Munk is still singin' "checkmate"  
And I never hesitate to put a sucker in their place*

*[Verse 19: Sesk]*

*Most fly, Sesk, MunkiMuk on your playlist  
"Pump it up loud and annoy all the neighbours!"  
[Munk's catchphrase as host of the Indij Hip Hop Show]*

Guest rappers position MunkiMuk as a legend in Aboriginal Hip Hop history and an authority and role model in the Hip Hop community, analogous to the status of Elders in the wider Aboriginal community. Frank, a cohost on the *Indij Hip Hop Show*, has stated this explicitly to Munk: “Bro, you’re definitely a pioneer of Indigenous Hip Hop, man, and definitely I think an Elder in our community, in the Hip Hop community at least.”<sup>46</sup> This represents a kind of continuity between Aboriginal tradition and Hip Hop and contributes to the distinct Aboriginal Australian way of doing rap music.

The theme of community building is also evident in Local Knowledge’s seminal “Blackfellas,” released in 2005. In the music video, they call upon and celebrate different Indigenous groups across Australia as they cruise in a drop-top convertible around the Block in Redfern:

*[Chorus]*

*All the Murries, all the Kooris*

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<sup>46</sup> “Munk’s Last Stand,” *Indij Hip Hop Show* on Soundcloud, accessed January 28, 2016, <https://soundcloud.com/indij-hip-hop-show/munks-last-stand>.

*All the Goories, can you hear me?  
All the Nyoongahs, all the Nungas  
All the Bama, can you hear us  
All the Wongii, all the Yamagees  
All the Murridees, can you handle these  
To the Torres Strait, and the Palewa  
To the Anangu, to the Yolngu*

Their song is about “getting young blackfella mob back into their culture and teaching our history through music” and was played on high rotation by the national Triple J radio network.<sup>47</sup>

Similar to Briggs in “The Children Came Back,” Darah’s song “My Heroes (Salute)” is a Hip Hop anthem honouring the great Indigenous leaders that, since invasion, have fought for the betterment of Black Australia and have instigated sociopolitical change. Darah explains in an interview with Mat Ward:

These aren’t government-appointed “leaders,” these are individuals who took charge and gave their all to improve our condition. You won’t learn about them in school textbooks, but they are very important and deserve to be acknowledged ... we have to teach our kids about the Aboriginal freedom fighters.<sup>48</sup>

The rapper’s passion for enlightening the nation about Aboriginal freedom fighters is evident in the lyrics of “My Heroes (Salute),” particularly in the chorus:

[Chorus]

*William Cooper, Doug Nicholls, Jack Patten, (Salute)  
William Ferguson, Pearl Gibbs, Bill Onus, (Salute)  
Fred Maynard, Tom Lacey, Marge Tucker, (Salute)  
Kath Walker, Bruce McGuinness, Bill Cragie, (Salute)*

*Michael Anderson, Tony Coorey, Bertie Williams, (Salute)  
Chicka Dixon, Robbie Thorpe, Alf Bamblett, (Salute)  
Bob Maza, Gary Foley, Paul Coe, (Salute)  
These are just a few of my heroes<sup>49</sup>*

Both Darah and Briggs have received feedback from their heroes commending the rappers for their activist work in educating fans and listeners about the many role models

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<sup>47</sup> Mitchell, “The New Corroboree,” 25.

<sup>48</sup> “Darah,” *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*, accessed January 28, 2016, <http://www.realtalkthebook.com/home/darah>.

<sup>49</sup> Darah, “My Heroes (Salute),” *i believe in revolution* (2012), CD.

of their communities. Darah talks of Aboriginal activist, academic, and actor Dr. Gary Foley:

I would say that Gary Foley is probably my biggest influence. He has been a part of so many important moments and movements for Aboriginal people ... his ability to express the nature of racism embedded within Australian society against Aboriginal people is second to none.<sup>50</sup>

Dr. Foley lectures in history at Victoria University and has been a prominent Aboriginal activist since the 1970s. He has been impressed by Darah's passion for teaching his Indigenous history through his rap music, and has even deemed Darah and fellow Shepparton rapper Big Luke as "the next generation of freedom fighters."<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Archie Roach has spoken of Briggs's song as a sequel to his own, and says, "I love Briggs's song. It's about our Indigenous heroes. Using a part of my song, where it says "the children came back" is really what the song is about. I feel proud to be a part of what Briggs hopes to achieve and I really love that he used young children to play the heroes because they are our future heroes."<sup>52</sup>

Archie Roach's 1990 blues song "Took the Children Away" tells the tragic story of the Stolen Generations—the state's forced removal of Aboriginal children from their families—via Roach's own life experiences. It became an anthem for the Stolen Generations, winning several awards, including an international Human Rights Achievement Award. The last verse of "Took the Children Away" tells the epilogue to the story, that many members of the Stolen Generations, including Archie, eventually found their way home. This is where Briggs picks up the story in "The Children Came Back." Aboriginal peoples' survival of the Stolen Generations is set among the many achievements of Indigenous heroes in multiple fields of endeavour. As Archie Roach notes above, the music video casts Aboriginal children as the heirs of Indigenous excellence.

Young Samara Muir is cast as the celebrated Aboriginal athlete Cathy Freeman, and the video features her running on an Olympic size race track. In May 2015, three-year-old Samara Muir was racially vilified by a woman and her two daughters in the line of a Disney *Frozen*-themed event at a shopping centre. The woman in front of Samara turned and said, "I don't know why you're dressed up for because Queen Elsa isn't black," after which one of her daughters said to Samara, "you're black and black is ugly."<sup>53</sup> Samara's story spread worldwide via her mother's Facebook post, retelling the

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<sup>50</sup> "Darah," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*.

<sup>51</sup> "Darah," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*.

<sup>52</sup> Andrea Booth, "The Children Came Back: New Song Celebrates Indigenous Heroism Ahead of NAIDOC," *NITV News*, 3 July 2015, <http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2015/07/03/children-came-back-new-song-celebrates-indigenous-heroism-ahead-naidoc>.

<sup>53</sup> "Three-year-old Aboriginal Girl Victim of Racial Abuse: 'You're black and

distressing incident. It was in response to this incident that Briggs invited her to appear in the video. Here, Samara represents a real, living example of a connection, bound by identity, to the entire Aboriginal community. She represents an Aboriginal future that builds on a foundational tradition of resilience and excellence. The video concludes with a flash of photographs taken at a protest against the forced closures of Aboriginal communities in Western Australia that was held in March of 2015. The images circulate to the pace of the clapsticks and foot stomps to imitate an auditory and visual sense of traditional Aboriginal dance and ceremony, combined with the themes of Indigenous resilience and resistance to colonizing forces.

Collective resistance to colonialism is another recurring theme in Aboriginal Hip Hop. Rap music can operate as a means of mobilizing around an issue, such as happened in response to the Western Australian state government's proposed plan to close one hundred and fifty Aboriginal communities that was announced in late 2014.<sup>54</sup> In March of 2015, then prime minister Tony Abbott defended the plan to close the communities, saying "what we can't do is endlessly subsidize lifestyle choices." This, which has come to be known as Abbott's "lifestyle choices" remark, left many in remote Aboriginal communities "hurting inside."<sup>55</sup> Pat Dodson, former chairman of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, responded to Abbott's comments, saying "[i]t is not a 'lifestyle choice' to be born in and live in a remote Aboriginal community. It is more a decision to value connection to country, to look after family, to foster language and celebrate our culture. There are significant social, environmental and cultural benefits for the entire nation that flow from those decisions."<sup>56</sup> In solidarity with Dodson and a multitude of other Indigenous Australian leaders and public figures, a number of Aboriginal rappers used their public platform to protest and publicize the proposed action through music. Some examples are Perth rapper Ziggy's "Stepping on Their Toes" (2015):

[Verse 1]

*I ain't choose this lifestyle it chose me  
They turning off the power so we won't see  
Ironically it sparked a bulb in me that I don't  
need Tony's electricity to be free*

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black is ugly," *News.com*, June 23, 2015, <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/real-life/three-year-old-aboriginal-girl-a-victim-of-racial-abuse-youre-black-and-black-is-ugly/story-fnu2q5nu-1227410641110>.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Howitt and Jessica McLean, "Towards Closure? Coexistence, Remoteness and Righteousness in Indigenous Policy in Australia," *Australian Geographer* 46 (2015): 137-145.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Gordon, "Tony Abbott's Lifestyle Choice Remark Leaves 'everyone hurting inside' in Remote Indigenous Communities," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 14, 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/national/tony-abbotts-lifestyle-choice-remark-leaves-everyone-hurting-inside-in-remote-indigenous-communities-20150313-143lh7.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Pat Dodson, "Tony Abbott's Lifestyle Comments Highlight the Lack of Policy in Aboriginal Affairs," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 13, 2015, <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/tony-abbotts-lifestyle-comments-highlight-the-lack-of-policy-in-aboriginal-affairs-20150311-141u4s.html>.



and “Closure” by Provocalz (2015):

[Verse 1]

*Yo, They're cutting off the lights,  
cutting off the water  
That Australian tradition  
of Indigenous slaughter*

*From the size of Redfern  
to the Kimberley's daughters  
Dispossession, disempowerment by  
Government orders*

Perhaps the most potent example of resistance to colonialism in Aboriginal Hip Hop is AB Original's “January 26.” The song from 2016 has become an anthem for the movement to change the date of Australia's national holiday from its current date marking the beginning of the British colonization of Australia. Aboriginal people commonly refer to this date as “Invasion” or “Survival day.” The track “January 26” is uncompromising in its critique and mockery of Australia Day. For example:

[Verse 1: Briggs]

*They said, “Hey, Briggs, pick a date” (okay)  
“You know, one we can celebrate” (for sure)  
“Where we can come together (yeah)  
Talk about the weather, call that Australia Day”  
I said, “How about March 8th?” (that's a good one)  
And we can do it on your Nan's grave (got that, bitch?)  
We can piss up, piss on her face  
Get lit up and burn out like Mark Skaife*

Here Briggs characterizes celebrating Australia Day as drunkenly pissing on the graves of Aboriginal ancestors. He calls out the gormlessness of expecting Aboriginal people to celebrate Invasion Day and points to the hypocrisy of white Australian stereotypes of Aboriginal drunkenness.

The video clip for “January 26” is based around four scenes in which the relationship between Aboriginal and White Australia is reversed. In the first scene, Yorta Yorta rapper Briggs and Ngarrindjeri rapper Trials accost a white Australian man and rob him of his cultural identity (an Australian flag) and traditional food (sausages for a barbeque). In the second scene, the white Australian, deprived of his traditional food, is seen being diagnosed with diabetes by an Aboriginal doctor. The third scene sees Briggs and Trials, as policemen, aggressively arrest and interrogate him for no apparent reason besides his otherness. Finally, back at his apartment, when the white Australian looks

into a mirror, he sees an Aboriginal man, with the Australian flag behind him replaced by an Aboriginal one. The white Australian fantasy of assimilation has been achieved, but in reverse.

In 2017, AB Original's "January 26" reached number 16 in Triple J's *Hottest 100* poll—a cultural institution in Australia and touted as one of the biggest music polls in the world—and fueled a debate about changing the date of Australia Day. As a consequence, Triple J Radio conducted a survey of listeners and from 2018 changed the date of its annual *Hottest 100* countdown from the Australia Day public holiday to the last Saturday of January.

Two singles from Dhuwa rapper Baker Boy featured in the 2018 *Hottest 100*. "Marryuna (featuring Yirrma)" came in at number seventeen and "Cloud 9 (featuring Kian)" at number seventy-six. Both songs rap in a mix of English and Baker Boy's Yolngu Martha Aboriginal language. In an interview with Neda Vanovac, Baker explains his motivation for using both languages: "What I'm trying to do is put two worlds, merge into one and get a strong connection with both worlds."<sup>57</sup> Like others before him, Baker uses his traditional language to Aboriginalize Hip Hop.

The use of Aboriginal languages has been a consistent element of Aboriginal Hip Hop music since at least the late 1990s. For example, Birdz uses the Butchulla language in his energetic song "Dreamtime" from his 2013 EP. "Birdz Eye View":

[Verse 1: Birdz]

*Wadjala yuloi doongoi? (2x)*

*It means "where you from?", yo, in the Butchulla language*

*First thing said when the white man landed*

*Now we ask that question to ourselves, stranded...*

[Outro: Birdz]

*Nga Dju yaa-m Dhanawu-na (I am speaking to everyone) (2x)*

*Ngay yaa-la-m Butchulla (I am speaking Butchulla) (4x)*

As well as aboriginalizing Hip Hop, the use of "lingo" (Aboriginal languages) contributes to the ongoing battle to maintain and revive Indigenous languages. In 2013, Australia set the world record for linguistic genocide, with ninety-two percent of Indigenous languages only rarely or no longer spoken.<sup>58</sup> Rapper Birdz talks of this forced disconnection from culture, language, and identity:

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<sup>57</sup> Neda Vanovac, "Arnhem Land Performer Inspiring Kids with Goal to be First to Rap in Indigenous Language," *ABC News*, September 12, 2017, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-21/arnhem-land-musician-wants-to-be-first-to-rap-in-language/8543752>.

<sup>58</sup> Andy Park, "Linguicide: How Dying Languages Kill Multiculturalism," *SBS News*, last modified August 26, 2013, accessed 15 October 2015,

The dispossession and dispersing of Indigenous people meant that we not only lost our land but we lost our connection to self. Our knowledge of self was stolen from us. This is cultural genocide. This is why people like myself have to go back and search long and hard for our respective mobs' languages. Moreover, sometimes it's difficult to find elders who are still around and willing to teach us. In my experience, it's been difficult approaching some of my elders, some of which I'm only just meeting for the first time due to my family's history of dispossession. Asking them to teach me things that I've missed out on is sometimes a sensitive topic because of the trauma they've experienced.<sup>59</sup>

For Aboriginal rappers whose languages are "sleeping" (not currently spoken), colloquialisms from Aboriginal English dialects are frequently incorporated into lyrics, contributing to cultural pride and a distinct style of rap music. Darah stylizes the Aboriginal slang term "gammin" in his song "Why U Gammin" (2011), meaning "why are you joking/pretending." Here, the rapper has taken a word that is strongly associated with Aboriginal culture and language, and positioned it to become the central focus of the song. Two songs from The Last Kinection's *Nutches* are also centered on Aboriginal colloquialisms. "PMD (Propa Mad Deadly)" and "Black and Deadly" (2008) both emphasise the colloquial notion of "being deadly," as evident in their titles. The rap group even named their nationwide tour in 2009 "The Propa Mad Deadly Tour." Rapper Nay found motivation to write "Black and Deadly" after a confrontation of racism with a stranger on the way to Newcastle. After Nay sought advice from her father, he responded, "[w]ho cares? You're black and deadly. Who gives a crap?" His direction inspired Nay to approach these perceptions with counter racism and to utilize rap music as a cultural resource for empowerment. Nay explains in an interview at the Saltwater Freshwater Festival in 2013:

I was like, I wanna write a song like that, for everyone. So if they ever feel like, "Yeah nah, I am black and deadly man." It doesn't matter what you say to me, you know, I'm not gonna get offended, I'm not going to get upset about it, I'll just feel sorry for you now.<sup>60</sup>

The use of Indigenous languages in Aboriginal Hip Hop can be traced to the late 1990s, when South West Syndicate's core members MunkiMuk, BrothaBlack, Big Naz, and Dax traveled with Triple J and a program called the *National Indigenous 3 on 3 Basketball and Hip Hop Challenge*, also known as "Vibe 3 on 3." It included a rapping and breakdancing competition where Indigenous teens gathered to embrace Hip Hop culture. Munk took the opportunity to encourage teens to rap in their native language. He explains:

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<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2013/03/21/linguicide-how-dying-languages-kill-multiculturalism>.

<sup>59</sup> "Birdz," *Real Talk: Aboriginal Rappers Talk about Their Music and Country*, accessed January 28, 2016, <https://www.realtalkthebook.com/home/birdz>.

<sup>60</sup> "The Last Kinection" *NITV On the Road: Saltwater Freshwater*, Season 2013, episode 3, accessed October 16, 2015, <http://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/video/52394563612/NITV-On-The-Road-Saltwater-Freshwater-S2013-Ep3-Th>.

With Vibe 3 on 3 and Triple J we'd be travelling to all these different communities where people weren't speaking English . . . English wasn't their first language and it wasn't their second or third language. I was like, "Oh, wow. Man, this is kinda cool. I'm gonna learn some of this lingo and try to throw it into raps." So I started doing that just to show the kids in these communities that, "English isn't your first language, so guess what? You don't even have to rap in it! If you wanna rap in your language, just do it. Look, watch!" And then I started going round the different communities and everywhere I'd go, they'd go, "Hey, lingo rap! Do the lingo rap!" All of a sudden I was known as "the lingo rapper."<sup>61</sup>

The work of rap groups like South West Syndicate have encouraged Indigenous youth to engage Hip Hop as a contemporary space to celebrate and help revive the languages of their peoples.

Baker Boy has similarly been involved with the Indigenous Hip-Hop Projects, an artist collective working to empower remote Aboriginal communities. As he told an interviewer: "They see me as a role model, [I'm] going to communities and they spin out that 'this guy's rapping in language and it's amazing' . . . What I'm trying to tell them is, we can use our traditional culture."<sup>62</sup> Like Briggs's "The Children Came Back" and other examples discussed above, the video clip for Baker Boy's "Could 9" foregrounds the theme of community, featuring family members—particularly children—dancing their way around his coastal Arnhem Land community of Milingimbi.

The visual focus on Baker's homeland community in "Cloud 9" is representative of another common feature of Aboriginal Hip Hop: Rappers' connection to land and spirit. There is an abundance of examples in the music of Aboriginal rappers that integrate Aboriginal spirituality and connection to country. MunkiMuk (1999) and Birdz (2013) directly reference Aboriginal spirituality in their songs entitled "Dreamtime." Briggs acknowledges the significance of the Dreaming in Aboriginal cultures in his song "Purgatory (Let It Go)":

[Verse 1: Briggs]

*We carry our demons, We carry our beatings  
We carry our dead to the earth and send 'em back to the dreaming*

Jimblah also expresses a spiritual connection to his Aboriginal ancestors who have occupied country for more than sixty thousand years:

[Verse 2: Jimblah]

*Story telling in my blood  
I feel the presence of 60,000 plus years  
My ancestors roamed this desert landscape*

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<sup>61</sup> "Munkimuk," *Social Shorthand*, *Real Talk: RealTalk The Book*, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://social.shorthand.com/RealTalkTheBook/n261k6fSkAc/munkimuk>.

<sup>62</sup> Vanovac, "Arnhem Land Performer."

*From the tropics up north to a snow-capped mountain peak  
I'm mentally scarred from the bloodshed in the past  
But I been fighting fire with fire since the day I was born*

Here, Jimblah references the orality, mobility, and firing practices of Aboriginal cultures (and implicitly the Dreamings that inform them), ancient ancestry, and transgenerational trauma in a single verse. This juxtaposition positions his own Hip Hop practice as a postcolonial extension of Dreaming traditions.

Musically, Baker Boy's "Cloud 9" features the sound of the yidaki (didgeridoo) throughout each verse. This is in keeping with a tradition of incorporating traditional Aboriginal instruments and singing styles into Hip Hop that goes back at least to the 1990s. Munkimuk's (1999) "Dreamtime," The Last Kinection's (2011) "Yawar-Gu," and AB Original's (2016) "Take Me Home (Featuring Gurrumul)" are just a few other examples. As well as pre-invasion traditions, Aboriginal Hip Hop frequently makes reference to musical traditions that have developed in Aboriginal communities more recently. This is particularly the case with reference to country and reggae music.

Since the 1950s, country music has been popular in Aboriginal communities and reggae music had become widely popular by the late 1970s.<sup>63</sup> Aboriginal rappers often acknowledge reggae and country influences absorbed during their childhood, as these styles of music often share themes of dispossession and itinerancy.<sup>64</sup> Reggae is a recurring style in many works of The Last Kinection, such as "Happy People," "Small Stuff" (2011), and "Commercial" Radio" (2008). "Black and Deadly" was later reworked to include a reggae groove in 2012. Darah's song "Rebel" was inspired by reggae icon Bob Marley, as well as Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti:

[Chorus: Darah]

*Recognise, I'm a rebel for the cause  
Fight to the end I put it down for my squad  
Never back down, man you know I stand tall  
Cause they can stop one, but they can't stop us all*

[Verse 3: Darah]

*Y'all can't harm me I fear no army  
soul rebel original like Bob Marley  
Music is the weapon like Fela Kuti  
Y'all wanna stop me y'all gon' have to shoot me*

<sup>63</sup> Dunbar-Hall and Gibson, *Deadly Sounds*, 44–50.

<sup>64</sup> White "Rapper on a Rampage," 127.

Channelling country and reggae influences, acoustic guitar was a recurring instrument in early Aboriginal rap music and has been a defining feature of the genre. Tony Mitchell details earlier Aboriginal rappers who include acoustic guitar, such as Hip Hop pioneers MunkiMuk, Wire MC, Brothablack and also “political femcee” Jakalene Extreme. Munk talks of the influence of guitar:

More of the Aboriginal Hip Hop artists are into playing their instruments, especially didj. Remember, with Aboriginal culture, our aunties and uncles have been raised on country music ... All of us have grown up listening to that sort of stuff, from the elders.<sup>65</sup>

Mildura rapper Philly’s cover of “Three Little Birds” by Bob Marley is a potent example of this tradition. In addition to Philly’s use of acoustic guitar and invocation of reggae music and ideology, the rapper asserts a distinctly postcolonial Aboriginal identity in his performance:

[Verse 2: Philly]

*Look I’m feeling complete with Nike’s on my feet  
But I still feel connected to the land underneath*

Here Philly uses the symbolism of Nike shoes to express connection to Hip Hop fashion whilst acknowledging his spiritual and physical connection to country as an Aboriginal man. In so doing Philly asserts that engaging with artefacts of consumer culture does not compromise his Aboriginality. Though not always as explicit, this assertion is an almost ubiquitous feature of Aboriginal Hip Hop.

### Globalizing Aboriginality

The social environment in which Aboriginal culture is reproduced has long included global markets, electronic media, and a settler-colonial dominated democratic state. These things form part of the everyday in which Aboriginal Hip Hop is practiced, giving expression to a variety of Aboriginal identities, stories, struggles, and visions of the future. At the cultural interface, Aboriginal rappers have tended to navigate the intersection of Hip Hop and Aboriginal traditions with careful reflection on their own positioning in relation to Aboriginal identity and the dominant discourses of the American, global, and Australian Hip Hop scenes.

As we have sought to demonstrate with the examples cited above, Hip Hop is an ideal medium for the production of Aboriginal cultural artefacts and events that reflect the global connections that Aboriginal people have made over the last few centuries. Aboriginal Hip Hop is, often self-consciously, positioned as an extension of a long postcolonial tradition of engagement with black transnationalism, seeking solidarity in struggles against oppression. It allows for the incorporation of pre- and post-invasion

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<sup>65</sup> Mitchell, “The New Corroboree,” 23.



Aboriginal traditions and offers a space for the production and distribution of discourses relevant to Aboriginal peoples that are easily accessible, especially to Aboriginal youth. As we have sought to demonstrate, the discourses that circulate in Aboriginal Hip Hop continue to construct Aboriginal people as connected to country while facing the realities of colonialism head on. Hip Hop has become a useful medium for Aboriginal people to articulate a vision of the future wherein their children thrive and Aboriginal nations stand strong and proud as equals among the peoples of the world.

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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

### A Sequence

A warning to our readers: Please note that this poem contains a reference that might be upsetting and painful because the *n-word* is used (in the fourth verse). We were not able to ask the poet to provide a commentary on his choice of this word since he passed away in November. The journal has decided to print the poem as it was originally written, in order to honor the memory of Ikeogu Oke (1967–2018), one of Nigeria's most highly respected and venerable wordsmiths.

### No. 9: Native Son

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

I come from where I was to where I had been;  
And watching our new ways, what have I seen?  
What have I seen in changed America?  
Our hopes get slimmer, their plot gets thicker.

**Chorus:** Here's the return  
Of the native son  
To where it seems fun  
To hit and run.

} *To be sung,  
the other  
stanzas rapped*

So ever are we running from hit and harder hit;  
And ever are they chasing to hit us more and more.  
Their cops remain as eager to turn on us the heat,  
As they'll be tomorrow, and had been before.

I come to see my folks, my homies and my niggas,  
To know how well they're faring, the ones I left behind;  
And their state of being, and the thought it triggers,  
Still upsets my feelings, and irritates my mind.

*Repeat chorus.*

I wish their lots were better;  
I wish their paths were free,  
Free from every clutter  
In this land of liberty.

But some system locks your padlock  
And throws away the key;  
And thus begins your hard luck  
To set your fortunes free.

*Repeat chorus.*

And you won't break the door  
To avoid their law's disgrace  
(That haunts the black and poor)  
Though it is your own place.

And so their padlock stays  
Until you find their key;  
Or seek to press your case  
And end up just like me.

*Repeat chorus.*

March 1, 2018

## Book Review

### *Hip Hop in Africa: Prophets of the City and Dustyfoot Philosophers.*

By Clark, Msia Kibona. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2018. Pp. xxi, 312. Paperback \$29.95

Based on ten years of interview research in various African countries with African Hip Hop artists, Msia Kibona Clark describes the impact and evolution of Hip Hop culture in urban centers across the African continent. Clark offers a distinct counternarrative of Hip Hop in Africa complicated by the acknowledgement of American Hip Hop culture's influences in Africa and expansive in that it chronicles the diverse local, contemporary, and historical contexts that shaped Hip Hop in Africa to be its own distinct culture.

Clark effortlessly weaves lyrics (in both English and local African languages), interview data presented in narrative form, and full-color photographs of African Hip Hop artists with information on the contemporary economic and political landscape in varying African countries to illustrate an understanding of African Hip Hop as a form of cultural representation that can be used to interpret political institutions, social change, gender, migration, and identity. Clark's narrative writing is committed to honoring the voices of her participants, citing African scholars and the local contexts in which the research took place. For example, the book's title is a mashup of African Hip Hop artist K'naan's album title, *Dusty Foot Philosopher*, and the name of the African Hip Hop group Prophets of da City (POC).

Throughout the text, Clark chronicles African Hip Hop artists' names, albums, lyrics, activist work, and stories as evidence of the deep connection between African Hip Hop and the broader sociopolitical landscapes. For example, she writes about how various African governments use Hip Hop music as propaganda or during elections while at the same time countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have heavily censored or banned Hip Hop music and culture. Nonetheless, artists use multimedia and internet access to share their music and social commentaries. In Kenya, Hip Hop music has been used to both support and criticize campaigns for political office with little impediments to artist. Likewise, in Tanzania Hip Hop and state politics are deeply intertwined. Clark analyzes, for instance, how lyrics from Tanzanian artist Albert Mangwair's lyrics were used as taglines for the 2005 and 2010 presidential elections. Thus, Clark substantiates the significance of African Hip Hop and the responses it provokes as representative of social and political realities in each nation.

Each of the book's six chapters offers an in-depth analysis of one issue and its intersections with African Hip Hop. In chapters one and two, Clark explains the tensions

of language use in African Hip Hop and how artists represent their home nations as well as advance Pan-African dialogues. Chapter Three includes an especially compelling argument Clark offers on the ways African Hip Hop in different countries and historical moments can be read as protest music. Clark employs Frantz Fanon's 1961 theory on national culture surrounding protest literature versus combat literature to examine how African Hip Hop has evolved from protest literature to combat literature, focusing on how the response of the state ranges from support and inclusion in political campaigns to protest music being officially banned. Chapter Four describes feminist issues and the challenges of African women and women emcees who, confronted with religious standards and cultural policing of women's bodies, use Hip Hop to protest for women's rights. Chapter Five is dedicated to the representation of African migrant experiences in African Hip Hop that explains the often misrepresented narrative of Africans that leave the continent for Western destinations. Clark illustrates the tension between leaving and longing for home as well as the intersectionality that African Hip Hop artists navigate as they live outside of the continent but strive to continually preserve and promote their African identity. In the concluding chapter, Clark pays homage to the diversity among African Hip Hop that reflects the diverse local realities and experiences in each country. Clark chronicles the diversity in language choices, code switching and its impacts on identity and appropriations and misappropriations of African culture in Western Hip Hop and African American cultures.

The text is limited in that the continent of Africa offers a vast population to survey. Each example is adequately contextualized by nation-specific analysis of the political and economic conditions that fostered Hip Hop culture in the location being discussed but the text is limited in its analysis of the entire continent and focuses primarily on urban centers in Africa. Nonetheless, the extensive research period of ten years, the specificity of each individual artist mentioned, and the explanations of how Hip Hop has spread in specific regions like Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania clarify the goal of this work to offer a broad overview of African Hip Hop.

In summary, this text does for contemporary African Hip Hop what Jeff Chang and DJ Kool Herc's (2005) *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip Hop Generation* did for the study of American Hip Hop in the academy; it documents the power and history of the culture in a comprehensive way for both popular and scholarly audiences. Like the scholars that preceded Clark, this text amplifies the voices, praxis, and significance of a generation of African Hip Hop, its diverse cultural representations, and their meanings.

*Dr. Camea Davis is a poet, educator and educational researcher with a heart for urban youth and communities. She earned her doctorate in educational policy studies with minors in curriculum and instruction and educational technology from Ball State University. She currently works as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at Georgia State University in the Department of Middle and Secondary Education. Davis also serves as the national director of the Youth Poet Laureate program, an initiative of Urban Word, an award-winning youth literary arts and youth*

*development organization. Her research interests include culturally responsive teacher education, youth spoken word, youth civic engagement, and youth activism.*

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## Contributors

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### Co-Editors



*Travis Harris* is an Assistant Professor in the department of African American Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. He obtained a PhD from the College of William & William Mary. Harris' role as an editorial board member for *Global Hip Hop Studies*, numerous publications including books, book reviews and journal articles, cutting edge research and international conference presentations on Hip Hop has positioned him as one of the leading scholars in Hip Hop Studies. He fights to overthrow White Supremacy within the centuries long and worldwide Black freedom struggle as the Director of Political Education for the International Black Freedom

Alliance. He does not separate his scholarly work from his work in the freedom struggle, he sees both of them as working towards the goal of getting African and African diasporic peoples free. Travis Harris is Hip Hop. He is also an ordained minister and is driven to ensure that those “from the bottom” are not forgotten, in academia or the freedom struggle.



An ethnomusicologist and popular music scholar, *Sinran Singh* was awarded the Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellowship in 2019. Her current research focuses on music and boxing in London; interrogating each as an integrated socio-cultural performative practice, she examines gender, race and class in London. Ethnographic enquiry analyses branding in music and boxing as performance of identity in negotiation of socio-economic issues, and as hyper-visual representation of identity and performance. This project was also awarded the Marie

Skłodowska-Curie actions Seal of Excellence in 2019 under Horizon 2020, the EU Programme for Research and Innovation. She was awarded the Reid scholarship and the Overseas Research Award at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she was obtained her doctorate in 2018. Her doctoral research interrogated hip hop in Uganda. Combining ethnomusicology with visual and cultural studies, and political economy, she critically interrogates self-fashioning through consumption in sites of socio-economic fragility. She developed frameworks of image, branding and belonging, which inform



her current research, through collaborative processes in the creation of promotional imagery and visual branding for stakeholders.



With twenty three years of academic work experience, *Daniel White Hodge*, PhD, is a recognized Hip Hop culture expert & cultural literacy communications scholar. Dr. Hodge is Professor of Intercultural Communications, department chair of the Communication Arts Department, and research lead on the Catalyst\_ \_ 606 program at North Park University in Chicago. His research interests are the intersections of faith, Hip Hop culture, race/ethnicity, & young adult ethnic-minority emerging generations. Dr. Hodge has worked in the urban youth and Hip Hop context for over 20 years. He has worked with

and among post-soul emerging adults and has done work with undocumented youth in Los Angeles. His four books are *Heaven Has A Ghetto: The Missiological Gospel & Theology of Tupac Amaru Shakur* (VDM 2009), *The Soul Of Hip Hop: Rimbs, Timbs, & A Cultural Theology* (IVP 2010), *Hip Hop's Hostile Gospel: A Post Soul Theological Exploration* (Brill Academic 2017) and *Homeland Insecurity: A Hip Hop Missiology for the Post-Civil Rights Context* (IVP Academic 2018). More can be found at [www.whitehodge.com](http://www.whitehodge.com) and [www.whitehodgepodcasts.com](http://www.whitehodgepodcasts.com)

## Authors



*Rhyann Clapham* is a Hip Hop artist and drummer under the rap pseudonym **DOBBY**. He has completed a Bachelor of Music at the University of NSW, and Honours in Indigenous Studies in 2015. Rhyann's thesis, titled: 'I got the mics on, my people speak' is an investigation into the evolution of Aboriginal Hip Hop in contemporary Australia. He proudly identifies as a Filipino and Aboriginal musician, and a member of the Murrawarri Republic in

Brewarrina, NSW. Rhyann currently facilitates Hip Hop and drum workshops in community centres, and both primary and high schools throughout Sydney and rural NSW. Rhyann co-hosts the Hip Hop show "Sunsets with **DOBBY** and **DIOLA**" on FBi Radio. He is currently an academic tutor in Indigenous Studies at UNSW.



*Joanna Daguirane Da Sylva*, M.A., is an entrepreneur and a student for life committed to unveil subjugated African histories. She received her Master's in International Affairs from the New School University, NY in 2010. Joanna completed her second Master's in Educational Policy, with a specialization in Educational Leadership and Administration, at the University of British Columbia in 2016. Joanna was born in Belgium from a Luxembourgish mother and a Senegalese father and grew up in New York. As a result of her mixed heritage, her Pan-African background, and her passion for African history, Joanna's work is grounded in social justice and is committed to unveil, restore and rewrite African history in a way that honors, includes and respects African voices and knowledges. Joanna is also a yoga teacher who uses her deep love for African music and Hip Hop to teach dynamic, conscious and fun yoga classes.



*Tasha Iglesias* recently earned her Doctorate in Educational Leadership (Ed.D) at California State University Long Beach. Dr. Iglesias serves as the Global Director of Education for Generation Hip Hop, as an Educational Committee member for the Universal Hip Hop Museum and Adjunct Faculty Member for Southern New Hampshire University, the University of California, Riverside and Fullerton College. Dr. Iglesias also serves as the Graduate Student Representative for the Hip Hop SIG for AERA. Dr. Iglesias's dissertation was titled "Each One, Teach One": The Impact of a Hip Hop Learning Community on the Cultural Wealth of Foster Youth in Higher Education. Dr. Iglesias, also known as Dr. Freeze, research interest include: Hip Hop Pedagogy and Education in Higher Education, Hip Hop as a source of empowerment, and the history of Hip Hop. Dr. Freeze develops curriculum, trains professors and presents on her research across the world.



**Igor Johannsen**, M.A., is a research fellow in the research network “Re-Configurations: History, Remembrance and Transformation Processes in the Middle East and North Africa” at the Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies (CNMS) at the University of Marburg, Germany. He received his Magister Artium in Islamic Studies, History, and Political Science from the University of Hamburg in 2011. He is co-editor of the 7<sup>th</sup> issue of *META – Middle East Topics and Arguments*, a peer-reviewed open-access online journal, with the title “Culture.” Igor Johannsen is a doctoral candidate at the department for Arabic Language and Culture at the CNMS and works on his dissertation titled “Re-Creation, Resistance, and Religion. Localizing a Global Culture: The Case of Arabic Rap after 2011.” His main fields of interest are hip hop-culture, cultural theory, Arabic history and philosophy, and the political geography of the Middle East and Islam.



**Benjamin Kelly** is a Lecturer of Australian Indigenous Studies with Nura Gili at the University of New South Wales, where he has taught since 2007. The overarching theme across his research and teaching has been a concern with the politics and ideology of struggles for social change. He is currently an education focused academic, teaching introductory Indigenous Studies as well as courses on Indigenous popular culture, critical race and whiteness studies, and critical Indigenous theory.



**Mich Yonah Nyawalo** is an Associate Professor of World Literature at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio. He earned his Bachelor’s and Master of Arts degrees in English (with specializations in literature, sociolinguistics and cultural studies) at West University and Gothenburg University (respectively) in Sweden. He completed his second Master’s as well as a Ph.D. in comparative literature with a focus on media and globalization studies at the Pennsylvania State University. He is fluent in French, English, Swedish, Swahili and Luo. The years he has spent living and studying in Kenya, Uganda, France, Sweden and the United States have highly defined his academic projects, which appropriate a mixture of critical tools and

scholarly texts derived from the fields of African, African Diaspora and African American Studies.

*Ikeogu Oke* was the winner of the 2017 Nigeria Prize for Literature, generally regarded as Africa's most prestigious literary prize, sponsored by the Nigeria LNG Limited and awarded for *The Heresiad* (2017), his book-length, musical and dramitizable epic poem, which he described as operatic poetry. He graduated with a BA in English and Literary Studies from the University of Calabar and an MA in Literature from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His first published poem, "Circulating Good," which earned him his first royalty, was written at the age of 19 and published in 1988 by *Unity Magazine*, the flagship journal of the Unity School of Christianity, Kansas City, Missouri. Since then his poems and other writings have been published in *Unity Magazine* and various other outlets on both sides of the Atlantic, Europe and Asia. These include *DISCOVERY*, published in Braille by the John Milton Society for the Blind, New York, *Happiness The Delight Tree* (2015), "An Anthology of Contemporary International Poetry" published "In honor of the International Day of Happiness" by the United Nations SRC Society of Writers, New York, and *Prosopisia*, "the official Journal of A. R. A. W. I.II... (Academy of raite\*(s) And World Literati), India." In 2010 Nadine Gordimer, the winner of the 1991 Nobel Prize in Literature, selected *Salutes Without Guns* (2009), Oke's second book of poems, as his Book of the Year for *The Times Literary Supplement* (TLS), describing him as "a poet who finds the metaphor for what has happened and continues..." and who "...does so timelessly and tellingly as perhaps only a poet can." Oke is also a performance poet and have performed his poems in several countries including the United States, Nigeria and South Africa. In 2014, he was a special performance poet guest of Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, during the Chinua Achebe Colloquium.





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## The Tupac Shakur Memorial Poems/Songs

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*Ikeogu Oke*

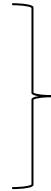
A Sequence

### No. 10: Go Tell It on the Mountain

(For Rap Music, to the Memory of Tupac Shakur)

I wasn't gone forever;  
I wasn't gone for good;  
Your dude had always known  
He'd always be with you.

**Chorus:** Go tell in on the mountain;  
Come sing it in the streets;  
Go shout it down the valley,  
That Tupac lives!



*To be sung,  
the other  
stanzas rapped*

I'm back, I'm back, I'm back;  
I'm back to be with you;  
And though I leave again,  
I'll ever stick around.

*Repeat chorus.*

Those that killed my body  
Had set my spirit free  
To ever seek to be  
With those I love like you.

*Repeat chorus.*

And so it'll always be  
Between my fate and yours:  
United they will be  
In good times and in bad.

*Repeat chorus.*

And let your faith be strong,  
Though you live in fear;  
And never cease to strive  
For better days ahead.

*Repeat chorus.*

Our suns shall rise together  
Towards that future time  
When they'll cease to set  
But ever shine and shine

*Repeat chorus.*

And so our moons will glow  
And light our every night  
And with their gentle beams  
Caress our dreams with hope.

*Repeat chorus.*

Now you may raise your hands  
And make the sign of love  
Towards their hearts that make us  
The target of their hate.

*Repeat chorus.*

And those who fear and tremble  
That you and I may rise,  
And therefore use their power  
To keep us low or down.

*Repeat chorus.*

March 1, 2018