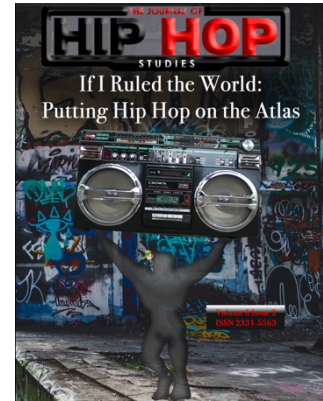


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How did a group of obscure and disenfranchised teenagers from the South Bronx develop an identity and a culture that has spread around the world? As this special issue argues, Hip Hop did not go global in the late 1970s and early 1980s, this African 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 ciphars 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: Woaahhhh! 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 Matthaues: 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 Matthaesus: 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 Matthaesus: 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 Matthaesus: 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 Matthaesus: 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.