

AN AFROCENTRIC ANALYSIS OF HIP-HOP MUSICAL ART COMPOSITION
AND PRODUCTION: ROLES, THEMES, TECHNIQUES, AND CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

An Afrocentric Analysis of Hip-Hop Musical Art Composition and Production:
Roles, Themes, Techniques, and Contexts.

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This thesis investigates the roles, themes, techniques and contexts of composition in hip-hop. It seeks to explain how hip-hop artists view and define their work, while also taking into consideration the viewpoints of other participants in the marketing pool of hip-hop production and consumption.

The conceptual plan on which the study is based is Afrocentric; coupled with Ethnographic method of data processing and interpretation. This method is comprised of personal interviews, participant observation, sonic analysis and the use of bibliographic entries and notes that allows for sense and meaning in text. Also used are documented data, which contain descriptions of hip-hop lyrics, interviews, opinions, journalistic notes, and scholarly reports as a means of evolving a cohesive sense of the message's intent, opinion, knowledge of its roles, themes, techniques, images, and contexts

The study found that the issues and themes that dominate hip-hop include bondage impairment, concern over currently warped social values and trends, and

challenges over oppressive cultural values and social institutions. The artists whose compositions and renderings were used for the purpose of this study not only demonstrated an ability to isolate and construct themes about issues, but were also familiar with the issues that reveal them as agents for the liberation of the minds of their Diaspora Africa peoples and communities. Their music and grassroots commentaries were found to be appropriately designed to persuade their targeted audience to greater awareness. They conveyed messages that encouraged positive attitude and behavioral change in respect to addressed themes that were, in the main, issues of disenfranchisement. They addressed negative, disapproving behaviors which the atmosphere of disenfranchisement has spurned, and were being expressed through the media of the hip-hop rap musicals.

The study also highlights the connection between classical African musical expressions and postmodern Diaspora African musical innovations.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“When life cannot find a singer to sing her melodies,
she produces a philosopher to explain her rhythm.”
— Khalil Gibran, paraphrased

Genealogically speaking, hip-hop is a globally circulating ancestral African melody form that bespeaks the narrating life rhythms of the Diasporan Africa in the Americas and West Indies, particularly the life of the African-Americans of the United States. Hip-hop is an African rap and talk, a genre that belongs to an African musical expression by lineage, and spans various art forms and time periods. This musical expression has flowed along several artistic traditions with arterial tributaries such as Jeli (griot), spirituals, work songs, blues, jazz, rock and roll, reggae, rhythm and blues, rumba, bebop, gospel, and soul music, and has now become hip-hop.

For purposes of this study, hip-hop has been defined as the system of viewing situations and circumstances, drawing attention to who we are, who we were, and who we can and should become. By this implication, hip-hop is being treated as a social commentary form, an encoded message that offers critical reflections on the complexities of postmodern African-American life (Cradock-Willis 1989). The hip-hop composer or artist is therefore, a student of social observation who seeks to achieve intellectual

satisfaction through musical liberty that celebrates beauty, symmetry and balance, while articulating satire in such a way that makes the artist a credible, participating observer in the melodies and rhythms of life that hip-hop commentary documents.

Eliza Thomas, associate editor of Los Angeles' Whole Life Times, describes hip-hop as a "Pan-African folk tradition that is fueled by a" [notice of existing] spirited "atmosphere of youths disenfranchisement [and the] rebellion [which the deliberate, systematic exclusion spurns" Thomas notes that the atmosphere of deliberate exclusion of youths from meaningful and challenging life-enriching endeavors has been responsible for creating a species of unhappy and restive youths that today are considered "bitches, blunts and "blings." Youths who complain all the time; who are violent, materialistic, misogynistic, and patterned after gangster posturing; and who have heretofore made rap a mainstream music; which, thus far, is mindless and hateful of persons and systems that remind them of agents and agencies that administer their oppression and disenfranchisement (Thomas 2007).

The poet, actor and musician, Saul Williams referred to hip-hop as the only musical form that demands instant affirmation. He argued that hip-hop music is arranged or composed for comprehensible effect, and is done in such a way that the lyrics fall symmetrically and harmoniously together. He asserts that hip-hop composition conforms to a natural African order of musical expression, which most often is premised by remarks concerning cause and effect, and stimulus and response regimes.

The Problem and Its Background

In his doctoral dissertation, The Hip-Hop Worldview: An Afrocentric Analysis, Tshombe Walker defines hip-hop as “an African-American cultural expressive movement rooted in classical Africa philosophical and aesthetic traditions” (1998, 3). While Walker’s definition contributes to knowledge of hip-hop as a part of a larger dance culture, he chose to develop that African-centered research toward the mundane, toward trivializing his study’s essence, i.e., what are these philosophical and aesthetic melodies and rhythms? For example, Walker states that the “hip-hop movement” represents a complex set of African philosophical and aesthetic predispositions, sensibilities and attitudes that find expression, not just in dance, but in fashion and graffiti, and records, spinning styles and rapping about every aspect of African life in Western society. Researchers and critics alike refuse to take into account the nature and structure of predispositions; these predispositions being the triggering causes of the effects of responding to an attitude or object in one way and not in another; or on the physical acts (some hip-hop artists’ behaviors or reactions) and speech-acts and/or musical statements and commentaries; these commentaries being the thematic expressions that support the conclusion that X or Y is an appropriate response to the stimuli that connotes the sensibilities; these sensibilities being the indicators that the respondents (i.e. some hip-hop artists) are fully competent to decode and respond to the specific message forms of the sender (society) with a capability to counter or compliment the attitude.

The concept of what any talk sounds and looks like is a crucial issue in thematic analysis of the content of any given message form, especially an African musical expression on the continent of Africa and also in the Diaspora African speech community. Hip-hop, I propose, is much like a child emerging from its parental womb, and the care that nurtured and nursed other genres of Diaspora African musical traditions of griot, soul, reggae, and others, where each has covered an epoch of the human rights movement (a right to express one's self without censorship) in the Americas and the West Indies as experienced by earlier generations of this musical struggle. Concerning the generational musical melodies and rhythms, hip-hop has a lot to learn from the musical generations that went before it, so as to avoid becoming a prodigal child. We should not forget that hip-hop, like most off-shoots, arose from a necessity to fill the void in spokespersonship approaches to the articulation of deliverance and liberation, theological and dialectical vacuum left by an insufficient seizure of power of earlier generation musical commentaries, speech acts and statements.

This issue of time-governed irrelevance and diminished influence degenerated and turned off to such an extent that it became sheer sweet melodies with the words losing their liberation objectives intended in their creation and purpose. It makes hip-hop a necessity in that its arrival is viewed as a necessary evil in the eyes of Establishment critics and parents, coming as it has with its bold indecency of rude and vulgar language patterns, and its composition and production. It makes sense to argue that hip-hop came to fill an important need; that it emerged from successes and failures, as well as from unsatisfying, and unfilled voids left behind by incapacitated civil rights and civil liberties

movement expressions, and judgments of the environmental responses to our behavior in terms of the impact of mistreatments felt by the Diaspora African soldiers in the Vietnam War and at home. Whether it be, jeopardizing Diaspora Africans' lives through the peddling and consumption of drugs; the unemployment of inner city youths, and college and university graduates, or the racial discrimination, the rise of gangs, AIDS, programs of assimilation; the dilapidation of Diaspora African neighborhoods and schools, and consciously induced age-old American value systems of inequality against Diaspora Africans.

These circumstances have not only fractured the Diasporan African individuals and community minds, but have put the Diaspora African people of America in grievous and perilous states of mind as reflected in hip-hop musical commentaries and statements. The fact that younger generations are always feeling unhappy and disconnected from older people, who, they claim, cannot relate to their problems of adjusting to an oppressive environment. This emotional gap between the younger and older generations has contributed much to hip-hop statements and commentaries that maintain that the adjustment dilemmas of youths are so undermined, nobody cares what or how youths see life, and connote appropriate techniques for living in the exclusionist atmosphere of a Euro-centric USA. As a prime example, the biggest supporter of hip-hop creation and its commentaries on the intercultural contradictions is an artist that embodies honesty about the bad and good situations, is the late Tupac Shakur, who created authentic lyrics in: "Something 2 Die 4," (Shakur 1993) in which he not only laughed at the ridiculous, he pled with the community to take up the challenge to

reject the unremitting atmosphere of racial mistreatments, and was sadly a victim of unfair criticism. Shakur was one hip-hop rapper who was certain he had changed and was remorseful for what he had done wrong in his past, but irrespective of his sobriety, had been pursued by self-appointed critics who made him a scapegoat. Also, he was bent on telling his fellow musicians of the need to unite; if for no other reason than the need to survive for both the hip-hop and Black communities of Diaspora Africa.

Another hip-hop creator of note is Ms. Lauryn Hill, a.k.a. L-Boogie. In 2001, Lauryn Hill recorded MTV Unplugged 2.0. Few people bought the album, but many people (myself included), noted how in an apparent mood of melancholy, nay of disgust, Lauryn was heard to break down in tears while stating how fed up she was about wearing the mask of a “yoyo,” of a fairy tale figure, and behaving out of sync with normalcy as stated in the tract, “I’m crazy and deranged.... I’m emotionally unstable.” Repeatedly, she rejected the iconic label of “celebrity” and other such illusions of grace that over the years earned for her the recognition of being a star. Again, I quote Lauryn Hill remarking further about her emotional distancing from the graces which she also did on that same track:

I used to get dressed for y’all; I don’t do that anymore. I used to be a performer, and I really don’t consider myself a performer anymore.... I had created this public persona, this public illusion, and it held me hostage. I couldn’t be a real person, because you’re too afraid of what our public will say. At that point, I had to do some dying. (Hill 2001)

Other times, critics are wont to pass judgment on artists such as Lauryn Hill who attempt to throw off the façade of “a lunatic on stage;” and who honestly long to be seen as a normal person. Scathing criticisms would at other times come against an artist who

dared to confess the fatigue of wearing the façade, the crazies' mask on stage. The critics who pass judgment have patented it as hatred obsessions. They do this because the artist presents in her songs something that mainstream society does not seem willing to admit as worthy subject matter to be transmitted through the airwaves. Hence, oftentimes an artist is required wear make-up in specific modalities, which serves as his or her trademark image on stage. The critics in our reference did not like the disclosure of Ms. Hill's disgust over appearing silly on stage as she wrote in the aforementioned track. Those same critics treat as bizarre and rebellious acts of breaking the rules of the musical, stagecraft by calling attention to what could be going wrong with her humanity in several harmful ways. We are aware that over the years, quite a few artists have died of exhaustion occasioned by extensive drug use, alcoholism, and other emotional problems of being separated from reality, but society has imagined and figured the stage appearance and behavior of an artist to be that of the fairytale art form, in which the artist is equipped with such artifices accompanied by a drugging that oftentimes enables the artist to forget herself in order to act as lewd, and sexy, and as wearied as is beyond comprehension.

Of course, the album did not contain disclosure as to whether Ms. Hill's disgust had to do with being frequently and extensively drugged, or not, though it has thrown much light on her deteriorating human condition. Yet, this is hip-hop in its barest expressive word: an Africa musical expression at its best, a calling to the audience to have a glimpse of ones troubled life. Worldwide, the African people have built this safety valve that serves as a second skin in the behavior of timely opening up and crying out. At

times, it is necessary to get away from maltreatment, so that you can come off it; off a career bondage that depressed you to a point of exhaustion and choked you to death. Like those icons of Diasporan Africa music forms before them, hip-hop culture carriers are still fighting career battles, and are making mistakes in their effort to make positive impressions, yet some have argued that hip-hop is a “fully developed cultural movement form that embodies and is showcasing an observable lifestyle.” However, I will argue with any of such assertion about hip-hop as having made the rank and the grade as conceivably attained by rhythm and blues, jazz, soul, spirituals, griot, reggae, rock and roll, and others. Hip-hop falls short of a developed cultural movement, nonetheless, it is almost a lifestyle, because a hip-hop head would behave in predictable and verifiable ways of appearance, manner of talk, and line of argument in contact. For example, with known attitude object like youths disenfranchisement; with a few of them emitting those behaviors that are contained in definitions of hip-hop and the hip-hopper. KRS-1, in The Science of Rap (1996, 5) writes that, “Rap is something you do; hip-hop is something you live.” While this is partly true, hip-hop is ruled by six elements: (1) the rapping propensity; (2) the disc jockey (3)fashion; (4) spontaneous breakout dancing; (5) graffiti and tattooing and: (6) human beat box. After all, it is in what the individual does that also shapes how the individual lives. One cannot separate one’s action from one’s way of living, for there is doubt that action and way of living are not one and the same thing. An individual cannot be partly insane and partly normal; one personality orientation must dominate both ways of living and action emitted to illustrate that way of living. Thus, hip-hoppers should behave in consonant ways that enable the onlooker to hold us

responsible for our actions thereby being able to account for one's labor; thereby being in a justifiable position to claim the legacy of being cultured and having a lasting culture.

This perception holds true if by culture we mean to refer to one's heritage, one's taste, one's knowledge basis, which must be based on what one has been taught and what one practices as behavioral choice from a repertoire. But culture, it must be said, is a lot more complex than the herein identified five elements of a hip-hop adept's lifestyle, which was stated earlier as being the following: (1) a rapping propensity; (2) the disc jockey gyrating and talkativeness; (3) behaving wearied fashionable; (4) spontaneous dancing breakout; and (5) graffiti and tattooing.

John W. Blassingame in his book; The Slave Community, (1979) alluded that much of [en]slaved culture, "language, customs, beliefs and ceremonies" set him or her apart from its master. Blassingame, like many other authors before him, concluded that the more these things influence the enslaved the more immune they were from the "control of whites, the more the [en]slaved gained in personal autonomy and positive self-concepts." (Blassingame 1979)

In quest of a working definition that speaks to the conditions facing the hip-hop community, Barbara Ann Teer defined culture as, "a way of life, or the sum total of a way of living, built up by a group of human beings which is transmitted from one generation to another, and this culture, for theoretical purposes, should be enhanced and enlightened" (Teer 1979, 222).

Still moving forward in the quest of a definition better suited for hip-hop, Portia K. Maulsby adds, "although slaves were exposed to various European derived traditions,

they resisted cultural imprisonment by the larger society,... by retaining a perspective on the past.” What past? And whose past were they drawing from? “They survived an oppressive existence by creating new expressive forms out of African traditions, and they brought relevance to European-American customs, by reshaping them to conform to African aesthetic ideals. (Maultsby 1990, 185) Therefore, it’s safe to conclude that culture, though transformable and at times seeming fixed, is nothing but a living process, not a stagnated heritage.

Lawrence Levin stated culture as, “the product of interaction between the past and present. Its toughness and resiliency are determined not by a culture’s ability to withstand change, which indeed may be a sign of stagnation, not of life but its ability to react creatively and responsively to the realities of a new situation” (Levin 1977). Were we to consider a combination of these definitions as a working definition of culture, hip-hop has yet to fulfill a few of the defining traits mentioned by the authors above. Other than, hip-hop’s ability to fall into line with its heritage in reshaping its birthrights, however not separate from the whole African cultural foundation, it simply appertains to its efforts at being an integral part of an Africa art form by lineage. Hip-hop has not earned the right of a living, breathing, lasting, separate culture yet. And should it either want or need to be, it must fight for its inclusion by completing the acquisition of a few of those traits to earn its rightful place in the Diaspora Africa musical lineage, which is a recognized artery of the Cultural Africa musical traditions that soul, spirituals, jazz, rock and roll, reggae rhythm and blues and others have attained in course of time.

In a postcolonial Nigerian community, whenever we needed a reminder of what we should look for in a true cultured leader, the elders would tell the youngsters a tale about a young fugitive who tried to hide himself from the enemy who entered a village. The people of the village were nice and helped to hide him from the soldiers. When the soldiers came and threatened to burn down the village and kill every man unless the fugitive was handed over before nightfall, the villagers went to their Congregation of God-worship Reverend Minister and asked to be guided on what to do. The Reverend Minister was thus torn between handing over the youth and having to take the risk of more of their people being destroyed. Hence, he withdrew to the seclusion of his room to read and search his Bible in hope that he would find an answer. Many hours passed, and finally he got his answer in the words of the Bible, “It is better that one man dies than that the whole people are lost.” The Reverend Minister followed through on his answer and handed over the youth with great sadness.

In his sleep that night an angel of God visited him to ask, “What have you done?”

The Minister replied, “I handed the youth over to the soldiers.”

The angel then said, “Do you know you handed over the Savior?”

The Reverend Minister then replied to the angel, “How could I have known that I was handing over the Savior?”

Again, the angel replied to the Reverend Minister, “If, instead of reading your Bible, you had visited this youth just once, and looked into his eyes and listened to his voice, you would have known and sensed the special presence of the grace of the foreknown One in the youth’s person?”

What therefore are the issues at play? The issues at play are best portrayed by the above tale of modern day ignorance levels in the obstinate misconduct of parents, elders and critics. Their misconducts have not only depicted vital world losses, they have shown that they are not just presumptuously shallow, these are evidence that they are quick to judge much of what they do not know nor have closely observed, but often have ruled on the miniscule matter of age, not wisdom, not discerning power. The elders, parents and critics have been ruling on the sheer empty authority of chronological age and not of mental or grade capabilities. They are caught up in sheer obsession with preserving the current culture at all cost. Once they are in that predisposition to act out and lash out at the foibles of youths, they frequently overlook youths' good qualities and obligation to continue the culture on their terms, as reflected in the merits of the youths chosen paths. Furthermore, what many adults and critics refuse to see about hip-hop is that the artists and youths, prefer to make mistakes, and even fail, but on their own terms, on their way to unfolding, building and tending their evolving, newly found cultural musical streak. On their platform, they're able to boldly talk back, comment approvingly or disapprovingly about the environmental systems and the paraphernalia with which the hostile environmental agents and agencies have continued to disenfranchise, belittle and undermine them as youths. There is a question as to whether the youths care much to know if their efforts are playing out considering their many contradictions. And I have to say, no for many reasons including the ones that are stated above. They would rather not believe in subscribing to those ways and personages, which came before them and failed. Nor would they believe or subscribe to those ways that have outlived their function,

performance, and usefulness like the rumba, reggae, soul, jazz, rhythm, and blues has. Hip-hop's attraction is that it wears its vulnerabilities openly. This propensity has even led some critics to view this natural trend as a major handicap against the rise and acceptance of hip-hop ways by the mainstream media and the conservative arm of society. However, I do not consider this position to be a problem for hip-hop's rise and acceptance. Rather the tendency to be open and somewhat receptive of criticism is an enduring quality of the change process as concerns hip-hop as a lifestyle and a performing art. Being open about one's vulnerabilities is a good way to show a willingness to gain from criticism which will help root and steady hip-hop as a living aspect of our culture in the long run. Kevin Powell writes in, Who's Gonna Take the Weight? that all hip-hop needs is, "like those other, earlier art forms, this streak of culture too must have mouthpieces: speakers, defenders, interpreters, critics, radio disc jockeys to track its evolution, and revolution, to describe it, analyze it, celebrate it, understand it and encourage it (Powell 2003, 35)."

The challenge in all of this is whether these elders and critics can spare the time and patience to avoid ridiculing and take a look at the youths' commitments to cultural regeneration that focuses on expanding our culture documentation through its entertainment resources, rather than continue to confront them and reject the truth of their creative work on the times, the oppressive regimes, and their negative impacts upon the youths' psyche, lives and aspirations. The issues that transpired during the civil rights and Black Power movements gave rise to the hip-hop mindset. We cannot overlook this

linkage; the issues of the civil rights movement are not closed because the dilemmas the civil rights movement tried to address are still with us today.

The above observed durability of the issues that the civil rights movement transferred to the black power movement is essentially responsible for triggering the spirit of today's hip-hop youths, in that just as those movements took on America's oppressive system on their own terms, so has the hip-hop patterned their battle to take on that same persisting oppressive system on its own terms. Hip-hop is therefore, by implication and by obligation, a link in the chain of an unceasing struggle to educate and liberate the Diaspora African peoples' mind in the United States. The power of the struggle that is inherent in the belief in the struggle, in supporting the struggle, and, in encouraging the struggle to own up to "who we are, who we were, and who we are meant to be in life: Diaspora Africans in the Americas' United States."

If the doubtful elders and the disapproving critics had taken the necessary time to look closely and listen attentively to the messages of the youths of hip-hop, they would conceivably see that the youths are the diligent and revolutionary carriers of cultural determinants, and have been demonstrating their choice as to which side of the cultural gamut they mean to give their attention and energy to. A major objective of this study is to shed more light on the factors behind the words and music of hip-hop artists; their inspirations, messages, audience, events-contexts, and influence suggestion patterns in terms of, among others, the use of repulsive verbalization of their statements, their melodies, their deliberate use of falsies, their behavior in acting out crazies' formats, their rhythms, and their lewd, vulgar mannerisms.

Review of the Literature

Substantial works exist pertaining to the nature, composition, production and performance aspects of hip-hop music, about stagecraft and social life behaviors, and misconducts of hip-hop artists. However, most of the available works on these issues of life and ways of hip-hop influence have theorized rather simplistically and disparagingly about those “kids,” implying that the hip-hop artists simply need to channel their energies toward something more productive though a positive illustration of what that something should be has not been given to serve as a guide for the accosted youths to redirect their energies. The lack of meaningful and constant parental leadership for the youths has made it seem as if the criticisms arise out of an antagonistic tendency of earlier generations to condemn hip-hop and its adepts wholesale, instead of looking at its performance shortcomings that advise steps for improvement.

Hip-hop artists are often accused of being preoccupied with taking power trips through drugs, wearied fashionable through wearing falsies, or as appearance freaks, and being sexist and property-driven view of music as commerce elementals. The observation is that “in hip-hop, it is sometimes hard to tell the difference between critique and collaboration” (Lipsitz 1990). According to Lipsitz, hip-hop artists often step over everyone and anyone that stands in the way of what Tshombe Walker calls “the commercialized culture” (Walker 1998). Most times, the problem that many hardcore fans, scholars, and fair-minded well-wishers face when it comes to hip-hop is that they

refuse to see that hip-hop must make mistakes in order to transform itself into an advanced musical and radical expression, deserving of a qualified place on the totem pole of Africa and Diaspora Africa heritage. This Diaspora heritage that is deep rooted in commercialized culture—where success is measured in dollars revenue generated and dollars revenue invested in property accumulation. The hip-hop artist must therefore, not be the exception when it comes to gaining the fruit of his or her labor. The artist should be a competent partaker of the investment worldview of the commercialized roots culture of Diaspora Africa in commercialized Euro-America, which is a capitalist society.

These critics may or may not know or understand the developmental and cultural backgrounds of the hip-hop movement bigwigs enough to criticize them with a fair-minded equitably. These critics may or may not have shown, through their misinterpretations and writings that they do not fully comprehend the content and values through which the hip-hop practice struggles, which the average black hip-hopper faces on a daily basis. These critics may or may not have taken the time to get to non-judgmentally know this movement beyond their foibles and fumbles yet have used them as a launching pad for their career advancement goals of getting better at criticizing. Finally, the complex dilemma of sustaining the movement and the artists is important for hip-hop's survival; however, the critics in their haste to go to town with their hecklers have refused to avail themselves of knowledge about the hip-hop cultural district. If through "legitimate peripheral participation," from which vantage point interested learners who, not taking part directly in any given activity, have learned a great deal on the periphery (Lave and Wenger, In Preparation, 1989),

Critics need to observe how hip-hop artists, scholars and audiences at various levels operate and communicate in order to get a sense of how knowledge is learned and processed in the hip-hop artist's daily living. For instance, LeRoi Jones, has said that, the black writers of music should,

Set up standards of judgment of aesthetic excellence that depend on our native knowledge and understanding of the underlying philosophies and local cultural referents that produced blues and Jazz and (hip-hop) in order to produce valid critical writing or commentary about it. (Jones 1976)

The tasks ahead for hip-hop writers necessarily include setting standards for their criticisms as should hip-hop scholars need to devise a standard to follow while writing and documenting the hip-hop movement as a subculture of America's arts and humanities. My proposition is that firstly, the hip-hop writer needs to know and understand critical developmental and cultural backgrounds of African musical lineage, thereby centering hip-hop, for in a way, the hip-hop manners reflect a vulgar form of the soul type of music that's still chronicling disenfranchisement, as did the civil rights movement object to the ideology of separate and unequal in the 1960s-1970s.

In making reference to developmental and cultural background issues, we need to go beyond the North American concept of its outreach to its Africa and Diasporan Africa, in order to make sense of hip-hop, its composition and production. Secondly, the hip-hop writer must show empathy through his or her interpretations of the struggles and undertakings, whether it is the artist's personal struggles, or it is the hip-hop career's struggles. Thirdly, the hip-hop writer should not simply use the movement as a ladder for his or her career advancement, but should join in interpreting and enlightening the

movement; doing a bit of corporate relations journalism as it were in favor of hip-hop as a system of participating in and providing entertainment through hip-hop music and its finesses. Lastly, the hip-hop writer or critic should learn what drives and sustains the hip-hop movement, in terms of its energy sources and its artists.

While hooks focused on the radical expressions and the deep structures of the hip-hop movement's language management system, other theorists of African music past and present have spoken and are continuing to speak of their concern over the radical, nay, the vulgar usage of hip-hop scriptures. Although Hooks is seen as an adept of this black cultural movement today, past theorists like Frantz Fanon, DuBois as well as a few of present-day theorists such as Molefi Asante, Keys Cheryl, Tshombe Walker, and Karen Ward have been a lot more active in vocalizing the black cultural-cum-political mindset of the new Diaspora Africans in the Arts, Culture, Letters and the Humanities, who are of revolutionary zeal, and have insisted on and are demanding favorable attitude and behavior changes by the Mainstream Establishment agencies toward Diasporan Africa Affairs in the United States. For instance, Walker speaks of hip-hop's need to resist oppression in America: "Expression grows out of classical and traditional Africa aesthetic and philosophical imperatives... furthermore that it is distinguished by its creative resistance to Western free-for-all, laid back, no rules, cultural hegemony" (Walker 1998, 4). W.E.B. DuBois foresaw this pattern in the Africa expressive motif in America and cautioned its abuse in his classic work, The Souls of Black Folks, (1903). He said:

the first African-American Musical retention is African music, the second, is the Afro-American music. While the third is a blend of Negro music with music heard in the foster land, that is to say, music heard in the receiving, hence, absorbing culture, of the Anglo-American culture. (Dubois 1903)

What DuBois said is that such African-American songs tell more in work, struggle and exile musical themes than it tells of strife and hiding themes. He argued that this trend of evolution can explain why the songs have usually descended toward the abstract, toward some intangible paralanguage forms of force and gasp for rest in the end. This is the case, since the songs are sung graphically with the aim of capturing situations vividly that gave rise to their themes of struggle and exile, and strife and hiding. Other such themes are codes documenting and land marking escape, consequence, courage, and tillage. The reader can imagine that those are themes relating to restlessness, nervousness, weariness, and activities resembling the same exhaustiveness in end-spurt anxieties such as in end of a field and track, shot-put throwing, relay runs, decathlon, and the like. In other words, these are culture bound, e.g., Cotton Plantation themes that are group experience specific. Thus, it is unique to the experience of Diaspora Africa blacks that have encountered slave trade and its inhuman brutalities that are from all available evidence apparently not remitting for the new generation.

These descriptions above made it seem, as though DuBois knew in the 1900s that today in the twenty-first century, inhumanity would still be with us and that we would be having discussions about the ownership and lineage of Africa musical expressions. Dr. DuBois' work songs spoke of struggle and exile, strife, escape and hiding, and should

represent a genre in the Diaspora African musical annals, which chronicle music of displaced and burdened Diaspora Africans in the United States at that time. And today, the story is unchanged, only altered in its format and form, but still music of displacement and burden and now generates a different genre, the music of disenfranchised Diaspora African youths in the United States; hip-hop music.

The psychologist, Frantz Fanon wrote that there are “periods when a community experiences restlessness and uncontrollable energy outburst as can be found to be chronicled and documented in its genre of songs” (Fanon 1968). As such, changes that evolve around a struggle would form the raw data for creating and generating a genre of newer grammar, and its innovative themes and ways of laughing at the ridiculous challenge. This manner of outburst, of proving oneself to be beyond the hurts of a fastened provocation is what mainstream elementals and critics tend to treat as rude and vulgar musical commentary because such a text of outburst has implications that denote a freshly invigorated rhetorical power of invincibility in liberation theology.

Hip-hop composition and production has the capacity of an invigorated rhetorical power of invincibility, its notes are often repulsive due its burst of energies as it focuses on strength renewing expressions, and would often come across in that format so long as the aggravating violent conditions exist and aren't turn off. Hip-hop's abilities to be vocal and vulgar according to some people's standards won't stop because hip-hop will continue to address provocations and aggravations through hip-hop's theological dialect, which certainly would sound rude and vulgar within the hearing of the Establishment's oppression agents and agencies that conduct disenfranchisement, e.g., the mainstream

media, the police, shop owners of street-corner stores and shopping malls and other individuals that are harsh and ignorant critics of hip-hop world affairs.

Similar to Frantz Fanon's address of periods when a community experiences a restless and uncontrollable energy outburst that manifests in its genre of songs, Nancy Guevara contends that:

Hip-hop must be understood in the context of its descent from historically and culturally rich multiplicity of creative expression of blacks and other oppressed groups in the United States. (Guevara 1996, 50)

Hip-hop may be better understood if viewed in its response obligations, in its proper historical context of replying and reacting to harsh conditions of living. This should be more in evidence when an experience, event, organism, or a people's experience is subjected to critical analysis such as those experiences and events that gave rise to other sorrowful genres of music such as reggae, blues, jazz, rock and roll, soul and bebop, that accumulated and derived their composition and production powers from the idiom of the twentieth century struggles for freedom and justice:

Our place is the constantly presenting and representing of context, of evolving presentation contexts; of those perspectives of life that is history to us? (Asante 1990)

Hip-hop seeks to present and represent an African musical expression of Diaspora African ironies of a "...land of the free and the home of the brave!" (The Star-Spangled Banner). Ironically, the hip-hop genre does not always use its musical expressions to present itself or its cultural community in a way that is "necessary to advance the intellectual movement toward a meaningful concept of place" (Asante 1990). The challenge becomes whether hip-hop can be viewed as authentic in a postmodern America

that refuses to view hip-hop's appreciable historical space with any form of respect, recognition or regard.

Who Actually Owns Hip-Hop Patent Rights?

In recent times, several publications, "New York Times"(Hooks 1999), "The Source"(Powell 2002), and the "Los Angeles City Paper" (William 2007), have all appeared in learned journals, critics' notes, exploratory works, and in mainstream media raising speculation dealing with problems of the identity of hip-hop's creators. The fact that they use their blackness to imply that they are adequately portraying black culture in its most exquisite, most exemplary, and most versatile light of blackness; and if one is to address the black culture question of hip-hop representing black experience, such effort is commendable, until we come to grips with the fact that such effort would exhibit some shortfall supply of meaning, giving that hip-hop is only a layer of a multi-layered meaning of culture in its richness and depth. African Diaspora without a doubt owns hip-hop in postmodern America because of what hip-hop arose out of and what hip-hop has successfully brought to bear on music as a cultural patent; the black experience of disenfranchisement for American youth.

The foundation of hip-hop must be placed in the space of postmodern pedagogy on the platform of who and of what race and culture originated the hip-hop genre of the New World's musical expressions, which is rooted in peculiar and isolated experience form and format of race, gender, and generational discrimination and disenfranchisement

with all accompanying displacements and burdens. And since the black culture in postmodern pedagogy is considered to exist in multiple layers of linearity, source, relationship and linkage, the trace is particularly crucial when dealing with human existence, intellectual property, experience, and stations of life. These would be more or less actions that subscribe to a “one way” view of its wider knowledge, performance and attributes. All particulars considered, hip-hop’s origins are centered in its African heritage first, then in its Diaspora African lineage. We would be at fault if we were to subscribe to a diverse pool of whims and capricious ways of thinking and perceiving values. Hip-hop no doubt has ridden on the back of certain other things that were there before its onset and appearance, e.g., music forms from the wellsprings of blackness like soul, jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, bebop, reggae, rumba and others, which still goes back to Africa.

In other words, hip-hop is a subset of a larger cultural life way transmitted through musical media. Curious enquirers have asked whether the black culture could allow the complete exclusion of hip-hop from its pool of folklore. For bell hooks, (1990) the answer is that black scholars may continue their probing and inquiring into the perplexities of deep knowledge and phenomenon when dealing with black cultural artifacts, in this case, when dealing with the foundations and literature of hip-hop:

The idea that there is no meaningful hence, unique connection between black experience and critical thinking about aesthetic values; more so of culture that must continually be interrogated. (hooks 1990)

Raquel Rivera Zoraya’s dissertation titled, New York Ricans from the Hip-Hop Zone: Between Blackness and Latinidad, (2000) is considered here with regard to the

difference between being cultured, but not being a proper student of culture; that is, the separation between not being an eclectic and, at least, not being a pedantic user of cultural artifacts. One can live in a culture, dress as the people of the culture are wont to appear, eat the foods that the people of the culture partake, dance as they do, marry and live within and as the people of that culture indulge the marital mores, yet there can still be a question about the agreement among one's degree of reflecting mastery and competence with the likelihood of some unmeasured exaggerations and understatements; this condition being the dysfunctional element of misapplication even when newness and renewal are functions of generative grammar and rhetoric of motive of accentuations. We can conclude that this person is a member of that culture by the examples, and at best, a good subscriber, not necessarily a curator (guardian, keeper, warden), and/or conservationist (ecologist, grower) of the culture. These lifestyle practices do not mean that the individual is well informed about the culture's arts, ideas, literature, letters; its humanities in terms of norms of roles, themes, and rules of respect, use, ethics and etiquettes. However, when it concerns the inquiry into what makes up a culture, the issue of uses and gratification would include the behaviors of the conformist who's not necessarily the guardian and or the grower. The student of culture should not only practice its culture, but should partake in the continuation of that culture in terms of its norms, roles, themes, and rules, that is its lexicon (glossary, word list), syntax (sentence structure, language rules, grammar) patterns of its uses and its gratifications; as well as in terms of talk, ethical standards, and other subtle nuances of being and behaving humanly in the culture.

The above are crucial issues of roles that hip-hop is playing in the African musical lineage continuation as pertains to its message dissemination activities often aimed to articulate the excellence legacy of the musical art form. With time and concerted work, attention to its compositions and production, hip-hop seems to have great potential to grow into refinement, and ultimately become acceptable to the middle class where reasonable effort is made that is geared to attitude change and a smoothening of its rough edges of image expression and presentation.

In the body of her research, Rivera attempts to credit New York Puerto Ricans with being co-creators of hip-hop with Diaspora African-Americans by almost reducing the term blackness to a mere, apparent, deprecating utterance about some “black thang,” “black hip-hop,” “black matrix” and “African-Americanness.” Her claim is that since Puerto Ricans were co-creators and were alongside its black originators, they, the Latinos, deserve equal “credit,” therefore equal mention in any reference to hip-hop aboriginality. Rivera’s claim is that the:

...identity that gives a latinidad the privilege of constructive opposition to the perception that makes hip-hop as entirely a synonym of blackness creature leaves Puerto Ricans in hip-hop having to defend their Afro-Diaspora ghetto-ethnicity as pertains to their actual role in the productive extraction of hip-hop. (Rivera 2000),

And that,

a privilege of this kind that the latinidad claims in the form of shared patent-right to hip-hop creation leaves Puerto Ricans justifying their participation in a culture misunderstood to be entirely an African-American cultural product and property. (Rivera 2000)

Rivera makes partial sense, but only in the context of one viewpoint. This is with respect to the matter of Afro-Puerto Ricans, not just any and every Puerto Rican, that in no known human history is easily traceable in roots and in lineage to African nationalism or African ethnicity. Even so, (and this is giving all particulars for examining and considering the hip-hop developmental and evolutionary affair) it can be quite an awesome task having to separate African-American cultural accent from hip-hop specialty and uniqueness of composition, intonation, and musical delivery. Rivera's problem of proof inherent is in her inability to substantiate the whims in her claim beyond reasonable doubt that Puerto Ricans are indeed and in truth co-creators of hip-hop. It is necessary that one be required to be authentic and substantial in any quest for legitimacy of a claim, which in her case, was to faultily place Puerto Ricans in the forefront of her framed role in hip-hop. She fell short of legitimacy of claim in that she took away the produce from the roots out of which hip-hop sprout and became created in the beginning when the seed was first planted and nurtured, out of the experiences of Diaspora Africans in the United States ghetto. Such a cleverness exhibited in Rivera's argument can be likened to King Solomon's judgment between two women (Holy Bible: I Kings 3:16-28).

For instance, if we grant Rivera's will and like the wiser of the two contending women for rightful and frank ownership of hip-hop to New York Puerto Ricans, claimers by implication, of shared creators and by extension of shared patent rights and proceeds, so to say, further truncation and alienation of hip-hop from its experiential roots, the cultural identity obviousness of its roots linkage question remains dishonestly and

ambitiously an unresolved fowl play. Though we can take hip-hop out of the Americas, we cannot take Africa out of the African-American insignia of hip-hop; and/or out of its musical expressive lineage of soul, reggae, the spiritual, jazz, and rhythm and blues. The issue of the claim appears to be one of the individual's legitimate desires, versus the individual's false claim of ownership, partial or full, of the power that adheres to hip-hop as a cultural product and its patent rights as an African art form, or as a Latin art form.

When I presented this crucial question of shared co-creation of hip-hop by New York Ricans and the mainly Northeast African-Americans for assessment by Fidelis Amatokwu, a professor of Journalism and Mass Communication, he was not surprised such issue could arise. For as he said,

Patent rights and infringement cases are common in the manufacturing industrial sector, that yet, it was usually a case of trying to harass a competitor to soft pedal a chase, saying, brand names and packaging cases arise all the time in organizational intelligence. (Amatokwu 2000)

Professor Amatokwu argued that this case over true and rightful owner of hip-hop is difficult to prove by one party to the contest, in particular by the New York Ricans group; they cannot trace hip-hop to any circulated Latin musical expression. An imitation cannot possibly confer full or partial ownership of patent to an assimilated.

An art form belongs to its originating croppers, be it cultural or otherwise; their Maker intends it for their social and group gainful exploitation, multiplication, and enjoyment. This law of apportionment must necessarily extend to our consideration of postmodern United States hip-hop, which for all intents and purposes, is an African expression their Maker intends for them to use in their culture expansion, financial and

economic, as well as a political sustenance, awareness and consciousness raising mission. Though hip-hop expression is occurring deep inside the heart of Western Society's capitalism, it still functions on a trademark label of a basic Diaspora African principle of musical predisposition, sensibility and statement making phonics of African-America. After all, hip-hop emerged with young adult males rapping about what kind of girls they like, their dream cars, living and loving, fly sneakers and playing the dozens. The idea was to ease the pain of suffering first, then combat the dilemma of seemingly perpetual lack and lag. Also after all, which global speech community has engaged and indulged in these manners of themes, construction and syllabic word organization other than the Diaspora African community of the African-Americans of the United States? To date, there is no other such community irrespective of any shared environment of mass communication and legionnaire popular culture of the mainstream United States of America, where also the New York Ricans draw their own original and imitative behavior.

In Karen Ward Turner's dissertation, The Application of a Functional Model for Analyzing the Rhetoric of Social Movements in Rap Music (1993), she asserted that rap music should be used to foster political and cultural freedom in the Western hemisphere. On the other hand, Tricia Ross, Edward Rodriguez, Juan Flores, Oscar Hardin, Dream Hampton and Rivera, are all well known students of hip-hop, and they are all characterized as hip-hop writers; however, I would prefer them to be viewed as a few dislocated Diaspora African hip-hop scholars. Their dominant theories and approaches to the study of hip-hop literature are somewhat limiting, not only in that they focus on rap

music to the exclusion of other essential aspects of hip-hop, but their attention to hip-hop contents examination criteria is antithetical. They are preoccupied with distracting from the subjects of hip-hop mainstream scholarship matters of functions, uses, gratification, roles, themes, techniques, prestige suggestion, image, economics, contexts and socio-cultural sources that are tendentiously veering to the narrow and petty question of who authentically owns a ethnic-cultural product, the hip-hop, seemingly begging the question about a nonplussing, no road issue. Those scholarship-bent also fail to recognize “the deep structure” (Walker 1998) historically and culturally dynamic factors that combine to form the foundations of the hip-hop experience.

Hence, often their writings abbreviate hip-hop by first locating hip-hop solely in America, then partially giving lip-service notation, or issuing a clumsy footnoting of its African origin essentially to avoid being accused of being shallow, which is a fair conclusion about their evident knowledge bases on hip-hop course contents. To wit: insufficient knowledge of hip-hop civilization source, route, path, way, track, itinerary, line, lessons, classes and gradations. Someone that this researcher knows has ascribed to this manner of text examination by our collegiate hip-hop scholars as mischief-making scholarship that’s much like calling Africa the Third World and supposing America and other aligned Western World countries as the First World.

How can any civilized and impartial scholar treat the beginning of civilization as though it were an offshoot civilization regardless of how advanced and how large the gains of technological, educational, cultural and scientific epoch the younger civilization may be? This process often happens with no regard for the historical content, roots, or

function of a form being mediated by research and scientific opinions and discoveries. For instance, Rivera's dissertation is deficient in that it primarily lacks an accurate foundation upon which to perceive hip-hop from any point outside African-American ownership. This researcher views her work to be the case on grounds that she and her work, seek to deny the Diaspora African community of the United States of America, the cultural agent, cultural agency patent rights and privileges by attempting to remove hip-hop from its cultural lineage, which to wit are: sorrow songs, blues, rhythm and blues, soul, jazz, rock and roll, and bebop.

Secondly, Rivera explores her own identity catastrophe, thereby clouding her own research, and, as such, offsetting and marring its scholarship, even its own partial validity in context of an earlier suggestion that Afro-Puerto Ricans could have Diaspora African inspirations without necessarily or likely environmental influence accents of the Diaspora African-Americans, considering the shared environment of a country's popular culture. Rivera's ambitious attempt at altering history and asserting an equal-membership of the hip-hop worldview is a case of triple consciousness as pertains to the question of what it means to be a Puerto Rican in a hip-hop public opinion world. The mistake of doing something obstinate to attach one's own in-group to another cultural group's cultural product as a co-creator and awarding joint-ownership, patent rights and privileges amounts to an intent to commit trade infringement through fraudulent annexation scholarship, as well as a misconduct under the course track of law and ethics of communication.

What is Latino? Spanish speakers? South Americans? An ethnic group? Maybe all of the above however how does it fit into blackness, into a Diaspora African union of values? How does it fit into the idea of an African-ness insofar as it claims co-creatorship? Unless it is a new cultural quest that the Puerto Rican latinidad may have all along had their roots somewhere in the Spanish sides of Continental Africa about which the whole issue of hip-hop ownership can serve, as a first step to its trace would become the noteworthy commencement. Environmentally, racial integration and historical blending conditions of our postmodern world, Africans of the North of the Sahara Region, and Southern Africa, as well as of Diaspora African Europe and the Americas, many African-centered scholars are nowadays arguing in favor of improved research topology and pedagogy whereby Africanness and African union can no longer be built on color exclusively.

Continental African writer, Wole Soyinka brought this stand to the foreground when he asserted that “the Cuban whose complexion (might) be lighter than the Moroccans’ (might) be less of a brother because of color [and language] than is the common response to the same rhythms, the same rituals, the same African sense” (Soyinka 1975). Conceivably, it could be Soyinka’s point of view of the situation that would have been in perceptual play as has been undergirded, but is hidden to some extent somewhere in Rivera’s illogical framework of a Puerto Rican having and sharing patent rights to hip-hop in this idea of Afro-Puerto Rico creation and ownership. Hers was not elaborate enough to bear this kernel of view, which is such an ambitious shiner upon infringement of African-American cultural, intellectual property. This researcher suggests

we mishmash it not. It would not be a fitting value judgment appropriate for considering the Diaspora African-American on the same subject of appropriate ownership of hip-hop mechanisms and machinations. An African-American life and times could not, regardless of the degree, depth, or extent of urbane assimilation of the African-American ghetto literature, become a worldview that's showing up in Latin America world musical expression. After all, Rivera has alluded to what she refers to as "...locating hip-hop within a black matrix" and ghetto-ethnicity (Rivera 2000). She would have been better off had she used the Network theory methodology of associative reasoning and values mapping for her studies.

The Network method does not show favoritism between social and cultural artifact, it thereby offers the scholar the opening to interlock (join), and interplay between creators linkage patterns for telling and showing the how[s], the when[s], the what[s], and the why[s] of the relatedness and the inter-relatedness of values and performing conditions of a phenomenon or an idea's derivation and expansions. We simply cannot take hip-hop out of Diaspora African-America, or dare take Diaspora African-America out of hip-hop beginnings without defacing any and/or deforming both Diaspora African-America and hip-hop tillage. Rivera's treatment of her claims lack the indicators of a legitimate and valid claim which has made her argument superficial, inciting and exciting public and scholarly debate to the extent of gaining no profit whatsoever to intellectual knowledge, which is not the same thing as a deliberate decision to distort facts in favor of deceitful and insincere psycho logic.

The question becomes how does one become marginalized as a participant in an assumed shared ownership of a patent right? Being a creator of something means that the one originated the idea and commenced to create same, and/or was invited by some sponsors or co-researchers from the beginning so that the evidence of the claim is not only and merely that of happenstance that one strolled into the event of writing, composing, audition and or practice. Thus, the main position of this research is to attempt to give grounding to the roots out of which, hip-hop is a taproot, in that its creativeness can be linked to earlier tendencies in a body of knowledge attributable to a specific or particular speech community. For after all, music and musical expressions are a speaking form with a format of organization and sensation.

In this work, the researcher has been noticing both a linkage system and feedback loop aspects of meanings that form the idea and goals of hip-hop and rap showing that these did not just appear in New York City in the time frame posited to be in the late 1970s. If one is to take a stand relating to cultural sources and influences upon hip-hop, we would be tempted to add that cultures have foundations for their model creations, therefore a model has a cultural source or foundation; no model comes out of the thin air, so, it is safe to say that no one culture is independent of other cultures except insofar as regards unique course contents. For example, we can imagine the cultures of the flour from native land to native land and we begin to understand this researcher's terms of imaging the concept of course contents here. Hip-hop is not independent of its parental foundations, how these messages are produced, disseminated, and consumed can have

frenzied sides to them, which in appropriate linguistic technology, we'll do well to view as messages having their "complex structure of dominance" (Hall 1993).

Who Are the Creative Producers of Hip-Hop Music?

In another theoretical area of thoughts about hip-hop there is Jennifer Lena's dissertation titled, From 'Flash' to 'Cash': Producing Rap Authenticity, 1979 to 1995 (2003). Jennifer Lena's study utilized the sociological network methodology to examine the field of rap music production. Lena's work is unique and important in that she covered a part of hip-hop inquiry that most students of hip-hop acknowledge, but do not treat in depth: its production component of hip-hop subject matters. Lena was able to give insights into how the artist's works are charted, how they choose the record company with whom to sign, what and how an independent label is engineered, and how they network for graphic affiliations. Lena's dissertation is doubtless a groundbreaking effort to enlighten the reader about African musical expression because many scholarly works produced on hip-hop and on rap mostly cover the subject of the finished product; and thus elaborate less on what the labor, costs, funding, and labeling media behind the finished goods are. Her work gives us a fresh look at the total movement in hip-hop productions network in terms of what drives and motivates it, who the power players are, and in terms of the work that is done to clean it up before various public audiences can hear the finely crafted sounds in this powerfully influential and inspirational industrial complex and further our American Studies, nay, our Black Studies intellectual enterprise,

we have here called, the hip-hop movement. Still, we need to define one or two basic terms that will feature prominently in this portion of the discourse on creative productions of hip-hop.

The terms Afrocentric and African-centered are used interchangeably throughout this study to mean one and the same thing; "...allows the student of human culture investigating African phenomena to view the world from the standpoint of the African" (Asante 1990). These terminologies help to focus and determine the location of values and in so doing, offer agency rights and privileges of hip-hop interactions to the African worldview subjects in this research. These also guide the scholar away from the deconstruction in "Euro-centric interpretations of African phenomena" (Asante 1990). Though an Euro-objective concern that is dressed up as hip-hop bias, Lena is correct in stating that hip-hop music has successfully entered an industry that was once considered to be rigidly white, a white male culture. There are many styles and innovations in hip-hop. There are versions of music called, "jazz hip-hop," "race hip-hop," "soul hip-hop," and according to our lip-reading of Rivera's work intentions here, there may have emerged another reconstruction, the "New York Ricans hip-hop," and now what Lena has asserted about all the earlier three versions of hip-hop, as having come out of the American power struggle and events structures. She calls "rap music, a low postmodern art, building its audience from inner city neighborhoods in the mid-1970s" (Lena 2003, 239). She is correct in crediting an observed innovation in the hip-hop process as tending toward grouped efforts in the observed creative types of production pursuits:

There is no individual level of expression of innovation; innovation is the product of group work, and these groups are bounded by criteria negotiated at the sub-genre levels. (Lena 2003)

Lena argues that there is the culture industry's concurrence as to the fact that:

Pseudo individuality is rift: from the standardized jazz improvisation to the exceptional film star types whose hair is curled to overlay her eyes to distinguish her unique identity thereby suggesting her originality. (Korsch 1977)

Although, to Lena, these sectors of hip-hop music were built on reactions and accidents of geography, style, and the need to distinguish the lot from earlier hardcore rap orientations from which they were built, from listening to their parents' collections of albums. This researcher is not sure if Lena is of Diaspora African descent, or that it matters. However, it is clear that her critique of hip-hop evolution or "reaction" is not properly conceptualized because her treatment of the subject matter is not rooted in its history of hip-hop in the Americas. For instance, Lena sees "gangsta" or crossover rap as reactionary to mainstream America. Instead of such a viewpoint, it appears that her knowledge of hip-hop as a subject of academic study has been formed out of an interest based on memories from exposure to her parents' collected albums and should come out of both a passion and a commitment to promote enlightenment and intellectual study of the ways and motives of hip-hop politics, sociology, construction, and production course contents. hers would be better still if it was an anthology of a "gangsta," or crossover of the hip-hop raw material sources. Indeed, some passions can be painful, yet motivational nonetheless. A passion is a labor of love that can spur creation and creativity.

An African worldview, and in this case, a hip-hop worldview cannot come into existence in spontaneous response to any “other” worldview, yet it can have its basis in spurred interest in a specific worldview with the premise of exposure long enduring and long stimulated. Such is clearly the “illogical imposition of external references” (Soyinka 1995). By contrast, there are no absolutes in culturally grounded theories, especially on a subject that is exceptionally less available in terms of useful data, and as complex as hip-hop, whose intellectual knowledge foundation is still scanty and speculative. For the most part, my findings point to the fact that hip-hop’s knowledge basis remains largely the opinion of popular writers’, being thus less examined through application of rigorous orderly inquiry, either in terms of levels of hip-hop notes, version, criteria differentials and similarities in commercial, political, social contents, as regards:

1. which version the original blackness and/or the version hip-hop, the New York Puerto Rican hip-hop (as sad as it is for me to label it as such), the gender hip-hop, and the jazz hip-hop are attracting political policy commentary and legal sanctions’ attention; which are attracting and drawing
2. advertising patronage, (horizontal) in terms of acceptance and
3. circulation ups and downs that flow from audience uses and gratifications, e.g., (2) are consumers buying more of a version hip-hop, or more of an original blackness hip-hop over a range of time (multiple purchases) and (3) patronage basis ought to include studies of which of these levels—race hip-hop, gender hip-hop, blackness hip-hop are all penetrating mainstream media, community radio, county-reach television stations, (verticality) and/or (4) in

terms of chronology as relate to genres social courses of community and society content variations, and (5) in terms of an adaptation and adoption assumptions as concerns which of these, version or jazz.

In cultural ground theories, people live and operate inside a culture, that is, inside a compass of refined values out of which one or several behaviors are socially approved behavioral emissions whose ideas are exchanged and modified as belief systems are developed, tested for durability of functional uses and appropriated through conversations, coaching, teachings, narratives, rote learning and observations, so the knowledge can be upheld or repressed as not useful through taciturn legislation or sanctions, or improper use of this knowledge. Though ground theories are often at odds with traditional schooling, there are nonetheless essential components of social interaction assumptions, that are essential steps to learning and using cultural values. The ground theories provide access to gaining much of the distributed knowledge that offers elaborate support for the social matrix assumptions (Orr 1987).

Jennifer Lena's From 'Flash' to 'Cash' perceptual cue is obviously an outsider's (Euro-centric) perspective on looking at the Afrocentric phenomenal intentions of blackness hip-hop. Tia Smith-Cooper has a birds eye view of blackness hip-hop's phenomenal intentions. In her 2002 dissertation titled, Contradictions in a Hip-Hop World: An Ethnographic Study of Black Women in Hip-Hop Fans in Washington, DC, race, gender, and/or section hip-hop is gradually slipping through into mainstream welcome consciousness or rejection consciousness. She sought to give a gender arguer's slant to hip-hop politics when she tried to give gender agency emphasis to female

practitioners of hip-hop in Washington, DC. Smith-Cooper's work is useful in understanding the battle line that has been drawn, and pointing to how female hip-hop fans in Washington, DC are waging war surprisingly from the spectators stand when choosing to contribute to hip-hop's cultural fairs. Smith-Cooper and her subjects struggled with feminism, or in this case, they were negotiating between being dedicated fans of hip-hop and being women hip-hop that are routing for women artists in hip-hop musical expression. This researcher understands Smith-Cooper as being properly successful in aligning hip-hop to one of its proper heritages, where, like Rivera of the New York Puerto Ricans and her section hip-hop school, she tried to put hip-hop performance recognition and acknowledgements on the always sensitive Gender-equal functions' balancing scale.

In contrast to many black feminists, such as bell hooks, Farai Chideya, Oprah Winfrey and Jessica Care Moore, who have been successful in aligning hip-hop to one of its proper heritage clans, vide, black males and black males' proper hip-hop heritage, Smith-Cooper put her accent on Gender hip-hop without accentuating the race sides of the gender accomplishment in her work. This is such that like many black feminists, Smith-Cooper still runs into the problem of having to negotiate the definition of feminism in an African-centered-cum Africa-male-centered hip-hop pedagogy. By labeling themselves feminists, blackness is at once again forced into an invisible disownment because the goal had been one of pulling of rank over the importance of the black man hip-hopper's alternative space in music, dance, literature, conversations and in everyday

experiences that enabled black woman to create and validate knowledge and worldview on their own gender's conflict of interest terms.

In these version related squabbles, whiteness becomes the standard because being black is rarely a measure for the black woman, whereas being white is a thing of pride for the white woman even within her deeper oppression in the white male dominated social matrix of America's United States capitalist society (Etter Lewis 1995; Wallace 1997; Collins 1990; Smith-Cooper 2002). The here mentioned women are, each in their own way, trying to claim their gender-shaded space within the idea of power, even as misguided and as misused as that power expropriation may be. Paradoxically and unfortunately, the black feminists end up giving away their power by juxtaposing that power with the feminist label, thereby thickening the self-disownment quagmire in which she finds herself: she's not just black, she's a black woman, and she's not just a black woman, she's a woman that believes she is more than a woman, she's a woman also at war with being a woman in society.

What more can we say about the depth of the malaise, than we could argue that the black woman's struggle is never on the same platform upon which the dominantly white United States feminist movement has been, and remains founded to this day. This for the black woman has led to an overlap of interests on one hand; and a pattern of self-alienation on the other where life is apparently solitary, if not agitated.

This inheres in creating an invisible alternative self-disownment that is always tantamount to 'pulling rank' over the importance of black man versus this solitary beingness. It is also being said whether consciously or not, there is always something or

somebody that is the absolute first in this ever recurring matrix view of ordinals that reads thus: There is the white man, then the white woman, then the black woman, and/or the black man. Only God knows how this stiff-necked idea of the black woman versus black man's power is figuring elsewhere in our other United States ethnic-cum-cultural sections as have somewhat stretched overbearingly to cover the hip-hop's movement in-groups and out-groups power struggles.

The notion that there is any such thing as the absolute first being the black female in hip-hop is not as contentious as any such idea that before the white female, the black female is the absolute first in the United States society's own social political matrix; it still does not hold true in the hip-hop's blackness matrix, the black male is not absolute second in this hip-hop supremacy quest. For when viewed closely without bias, Smith-Cooper's "merging of feminism and hip-hop is an oxymoron" (Smith-Cooper 2002, 199).

See how she states her indignation:

I am in denial. Black women are in denial. We have been fooled into believing that hip-hop loves us, but it doesn't. It uses us and throws us away. (Smith-Cooper 2002,)

If the above is the true state of affairs for black women in hip-hop, what then makes the situation any different for a black feminist in the entire feminist movement? The entire feminist movement may not also love the black woman, even when the entire feminist movement gives the false impression they love the black woman like sisters, like Angela Davies, Diana Ross, Oprah Winfrey and the others that have poured the bulk of their creative energies and resources into sustaining the entire feminist movement. If the

struggle is still that of self-definition and self-justification, then why can't black women explore a movement independent of feminism like Dr. D Ween's "Africana woman?"

The same thing can be said about black women in hip-hop: why can't the black woman who feels disrespected and undermined by the entire hip-hop movement consider creating something outside of the male-dominated hip-hop recognition circle and space? For Smith-Cooper, "feminism is a politic that you define on your own terms." For black women in this lucrative business of feminine power this definition has yet to have meaning: Black feminists fight against two kinds of invisibility; the first involves distinguishing their concerns from those of white feminism, the second involves exposing and critiquing the masculine emphasis of Black Nationalism (Ramsay 2003). Feminists have still to reclaim their power in the hip-hop power circle. Black females' attempts at reclaiming their power in the hip-hop circle have mostly resulted in some female hip-hop artists using the "power of the Pu#@#" (Lil' Kim 2001) and such conduct as appearing nearly naked in videos and on magazine covers.

Methodological Considerations

The conceptual framework for this study is an African-centered view of hip-hop's cultural foundations in terms of its melodies, speech acts, statements, and rhythms as being rooted in continental Africa with an environmentally conditioned Diaspora African musical genres of soul, jazz, doing the dozens, rap, rhythm and blues, the spiritual, reggae, calypso, and rumba. Data collection and analytical procedures for the study are

based on an African “cosmology,” “African epistemology,” “African axiology,” and “African aesthetics” (Asante 1990). The cosmological principle, which is an attitude source of responding to stimulus is valuable in exploring themes and issues that pertain to “philosophy, myths, legends, literature and oratories of the continental or of Diaspora African peoples’ (Asante 1996).

These constructions are valuable because they are thought to impact the way and manner in which people of African descent interpret and interact with the universe. This cosmological principle can otherwise be viewed as judgment patterns of culture when cast on the vectors of law and order.

The epistemological principle deals with truth and knowledge within a perceived African global experience. The epistemological principle is what urges the African individual to see that truth should be made known rather than be concealed, so that African peoples can regulate their life, times, and conduct in conformity and in tandem, with African cultural philosophy; if by philosophy we are referring to attitude, thinking, way of life, values, beliefs, viewpoint, and idea. Therefore, the principal areas of inquiry here include language, myth, performance, message encoding and decoding, and packaging and conveyance designs, to wit, in terms of visual arts. The truth or knowledge of a people is shared in and transmitted through the language and Para-language expressions. Language is communicated through textual, psycho-and-socio-linguistic practices. This term language refers to those acts that help a people to express themselves to themselves and to others inside and outside of the linguistic and speech community. This communication must always occur along with a gamut of nuances and subtleties of a

culture. Texts of conveyance may include myths, sayings, music, dance, visual arts, drawings, films, videos, fiction, principle, philosophy, graffiti, tattoos, signs and sign-writing, scarification, scholarly books and essays, popular publications, advertising, fashion, branding, naming, and pamphleteering.

The axiological principle enables the researcher to deal with issues of ethics, morality, law and values, in this case, within an African experience networks. The axiological principle guides the researcher toward recognizing and toward proper examination of what is good or bad, beautiful or ugly, right or wrong. For examples, see the “Fashion” section. The axiological principle helps to determine what “being human” means or what is understood as “being healthy.”

The last principle, the aesthetic, i.e., the taste and sensibility rule, helps the examination of phenomena in terms of event, its cost-effectiveness and impressiveness when cast in relation to concepts and standards of beauty and taste within the speech community, in this case, a community of experiences, e.g., of disenfranchisement, willful dislocation of persons as we saw in the artificial creations of homelands during the Apartheid Era of Southern Africa, and or, in the Racial discrimination malpractices in the Deep South of the United States of America.

In (1986), Welsh Asante defined aesthetic principle as consisting of seven senses:

- (1) Holism,
- (2) Call and response,
- (3) Epic memory,
- (4) Repetition,

- (5) Dimensionality,
- (6) The power of the spoken word, and
- (7) Energy and strength.

While Abarry, (1993) sees the aesthetic policy as,

- (1) Energy,
- (2) Strength infused and geared toward
- (3) Group cohesion,
- (4) Historical consciousness, and
- (5) Spiritual uplifting.

This researcher (2000) adds to the gamut, the concept of,

- (1) Enlistment,
- (2) Enfranchisement,
- (3) Approval,
- (4) Recognition,
- (5) Empowerment and
- (6) Positive reinforcement, as issues of the aesthetic policy.

These notions of a conceptual framework for assessing the sensibilities of African life, whether in the embodiment of lives on the continent, or in the Diaspora Africa, its bonds of influence suggests a driving force that binds the Africans together as one people of one worldview.

Linked by the preceding principles, this researcher has made investigation through interviews, participant observation strategies, data collections, and analysis to the

extent that Continental Africans and Diaspora African-American hip-hop artists and their audiences share and interconnect their cosmological orientations toward such gestalt concepts of truth and knowledge, good and bad, valuable and useless, beautiful and ugly, and right and wrong conduct. The most important techniques used in this research are long recurrent interviews (follow-up interviews when needed) and participant observation strategies (attending shows). It is considered necessary for this work to center the techniques application on the hip-hop community.

This approach is necessary to thresh out the sought after data since in this case, those who are best suited to tell the hip-hop story with all its necessary nuances of defense mechanisms and explanations, are the artists, being themselves the practitioners. This sample group includes hip-hop artists, the production staff and line individuals, as well as consumption participants (audiences). Participant observation is useful because the tradition of hip-hop is about call and response, where the participant and the artist are opposite sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other in this functional naming process. Participant observation was also necessary in showing the hip-hop community in its natural setting.

Treating the African-Centered Research by
Using the Ethnographic Data Gathering
Methodology

“If the foreleg is larger than the thigh, then there is an illness”
— Proverb of the Akan tribe of Ghana

The aim of this research is to give additional perspective to the African-centered/Afrocentric research method using ethnographic methodology to understand the formulation of the hip-hop artist’s voice. By voice, we mean grammar, composers’ selections and mixers, e.g., melody, rhythm, artifacts, costume, and choice of theme, affirmation, opinion, sound and sorrow, and sentiment management of the composition and production works. When this researcher told friends, scholars and well-wishers that she was considering studying hip-hop for her doctoral dissertation, there was all manner of reactions, and to some extent, innuendoes.

She was told that at best, she could only afford to write a few articles, and padded articles at that, on hip-hop that might possibly be compiled as an anthology of incidents and events at hip-hop concerts. The apprehension was thus because very few individuals could imagine a whole dissertation evolving from rap music, which is generally considered to be hard labor and a waste of anybody’s time. That was 1997. Until now there was not much sound academic research work available devoted to hip-hop music.

During the time this researcher was searching for a topic for her master’s thesis that would be current and academically fulfilling, the researcher could not understand why hip-hop was not getting the respect it deserved.

In the year 2000, when the researcher was employed by the Anti-Defamation League in Philadelphia, she had the specialist assignment to train teachers and administrators on the subject of tolerance. There, an opening surfaced as if a key and a prompt. The key and prompt was to have everybody state his or her name, and to announce a future project they intended to embark upon that could possibly change the world. Some people would state great ideas, while others would state questionable ones. She told the group of elementary school teachers and administrators that she was preparing to research and write her doctoral dissertation on, An Afrocentric Analysis of Hip-Hop Musical Art Composition and Production: A Case of Their Roles, Themes, Techniques, and Contexts. A majority of the group agreed that a dissertation on hip-hop would be a wonderful challenge to embrace, nonetheless, they also expressed doubts such as, “Why hip-hop? Why not jazz, rhythm and blues, or even soul or spiritual music, where there is a dearth of materials and a long history of personages, mysterious deaths and tragedies? Why hip-hop, the product of the less informed and less sophisticated, and perhaps even less gifted? Why study what the individuals that live on the wretched side of life create and produce?”

The principal of the school where the training exercise was taking place asked if the researcher would consider returning to speak to the students about this “rap thing”? Like many people with his degree of curiosity, the principal was skeptical about the importance of the hip-hop movement, but submitted that, for him, “rap is a fad that could not last for more than a few years....” (Jones 1995), which could only offer a dead end for a thorough academic work. Indeed, the principal was so skeptical that he desired that the

researcher should become the individual to oblige hip-hop the hanging he assumed the fad deserved. The principal said he thought it best that the researcher, a racial member of that African-American community from which hip-hop takes root, did the job, particularly for the following reason:

My students all listen to and talk about this rap thing all day long. And I do know there are some really talented rappers, like the rapper, Eminem.

He was saying, “Wow! Eminem is profuse?!” To this last statement of admiration for Eminem, this researcher exclaimed, because that was all I found to be sensible of his uncharitable remarks about “the fad, rap.” The approval of Eminem was for the purpose of this research a vital piece of information about contradictions in terms, seeing that, his remarks were so oriented after thirty years of modern day hip-hop and its truly talented men and women who have gained much applause, and have been contributed to its growth and acceptance beyond race, class, and international boundaries.

It would not be news to notice that mainstream America goes to hip-hop concerts staged by a commercial hip-hop rapper like Eminem. He has a fair measure of the success of hip-hop entertainment, if we must so measure it by the fact of how many white faces show up at a hip-hop concert. We can then assume and argue that whites can relate to hip-hop more so than other groups like “Dead Prez” where hip-hop artists are rapping that, “I am an African,” or whenever the hip-hop group, “Black Star” is singing about “Brown skin lady.” The point is that hip-hop is only acknowledged in mainstream America when hip-hop has a mainstream face, a white face, and only when an artist goes sexist, and racist, by down-playing blackness and femaleness.

Whenever the researcher was in conversation with white peers or non peers about the distorted inheritance focus of the hip-hop power machine, they are often pretentiously, yet pleasantly surprised the researcher feels strongly about the relevance of hip-hop movement's industrial revolutionary atmosphere. But the real bane of racism is when their white skin privilege serves as a blinder that causes them not to see that the creators of this cultural, economic, and commercial movement still lack favorable major dividend-yielding power within the hip-hop business, economic and financial yields complex. The artists compose and produce the raw material and even the musical expression itself, yet are separated from the prosperous yields. The artists make money for the largely white power structure that is the music industry; a fate that is unfortunately found across the board of the entertainment and sports worlds of capitalist, corporate America.

Musician, producer and founder of Vibe magazine, Quincy Jones gave emphasis to the viewpoint of the school principal earlier, when he, Quincy Jones, stated that hip-hop would not last but a few years, that it was a passing fad (Jones 1995). Although Jones is the founder of "Vibe," the power structure behind the production and contents of this magazine is not Quincy Jones, nor is it the gain of the Diaspora African power structure. When questioned about the many culturally mortifying video products, Bob Johnson, owner of Black Entertainment Television (BET), said he was "not in the business to uplift black images; that he was only a business man needing to put food on his family's table." Everyone is capitalizing on rap, yet none are concerned about the sustenance and nurturance side of the heart and mind of this art form—the black rap artist. For a long

time, Diaspora African youths in the Americas have been poster-children emblems of all that is wrong with today's youths since the emergence of hip-hop music side by side with America's mainstream culture, "rather than view hip-hop art form as a subversion or a disruption of the norm, greater good purpose would be served to see hip-hop humanity as an embodiment of the norm" (hooks 1994, 117). Most onlookers would like to turn a blind eye and refuse to see the racist, sexist, capitalist, and patriarchal systems' funding that is sensationalizing the hip-hop show. We would find indicators of the roles of hip-hop when the idea of hip-hop composition and production are appropriately conceptualized; this is a concern that would, time and again, necessarily bring us back to the topic of methodology, eventually become useful for addressing hip-hop works.

The Quest for an Interdisciplinary Methodology

Since hip-hop is a musical genre, (by which is meant a musical type, a musical sort, a musical genus, a musical variety, a species, a musical group, and a musical class) with multiple voices and varied methods of output, there are several methodological choices on how to analyze its workings in terms of an interdisciplinary approach to studying hip-hop. With such flexibility, a major debt is owed to the African-centered cultural input perspective, which is a unifying, critical research approach to the study of culture and its community of emotions, e.g., a cultural product and its economic and financial viability, a cultural product and its social value viability, a cultural product and its political and poetic values viability.

The Afrocentric mode of cultural analysis situates artifacts of that analysis within the culture's social environment and uses the body of the social environment's data emission to assist an interpretation of cultural trend progressions. There is the traditional Western perspective, in which interdisciplinary approaches to investigating cultural trend progression is usually not the best way to research a complex social environment data question. So, the question is, why exploit interdisciplinary approaches to investigating hip-hop? It is certainly not the perfect way to begin to understand hip-hop musical expression. The interpretation and links between the changes in research practices today implies a change in direction in modes of production within rooted disciplinary traditions. This is why and how this researcher arrived at an African-centered analysis combining it with an ethnographic data analysis methodology that puts emphasis on cultural forms in the knowledge base of the participant observation approach. For in ethnography, one has to make an "...enduring commitment to a sense of holism within the finely observed particular case of study. For instance in the situation where a researcher must focus attention on the embedded functionalist specter nowadays pointed out about the validity of ethnography which is not likely to go away" (Marcus 1998). One of the goals for the use of the ethnographic method in this study is to better understand hip-hop in its natural habitat, by recourse to look at the people in its universe of expressiveness, then to try to understand what they're doing or have done well, and how they're figuring out and configuring the world they live in beyond the universe of hip-hop where they've evolved as its primary citizens.

The question then is whether anthropology ethnography can/or should be the rewarding source of ‘partial knowledge’ (Marcus 1998). The present work is using the African-centered disciplinary tradition that is founded on practicing holism in terms of the idea of totality of expression, but from the standpoint of what the universe citizen, illusive or otherwise, says is his or her patterns of culture in terms of personal background, message, its encoding, purpose, focus, and mission. This is how we’re using the term, holism. We’re juxtaposing it with the ethnography method. The aim is to give power back to these subjects, the hip-hop artists, to tell us what they’re doing, and how they perceive what they’re doing.

This approach is the best way to explain a phenomenon that is at play, so that such knowledge and its rendering is rooted in the ground upon which things stand for in hip-hop, parenthetically from the standpoint of personal experience processed through interviews on what is going on when they think, feel and compose hip-hop, so as to see if they, the artists, understand their works, and are not relying on the one-sided, extraneous suppositions derived through listening to their music alone; and forming our unverified opinions of them and their works. The idea is to have a living voice of self-assessment and self-acknowledgment offered and presented side by side with any data accruing from also listening to their music.

By doing this combining of data sources, the researcher strives to break away from what Smith-Cooper called, “hip-hop voyeurism” (Smith-Cooper 1998). While this researcher’s intellect is grounded in African-centered premises, she is also progressive

enough to include other methods that are suited to vital data processing important to complement this African-centered work orientation.

The Ethnographic Method

The term ethnography comes from the Greek word, “ethos,” meaning culture, people, [stock], or race” (Vidich and Lyman 1994), and “graph,” which according to Merriam-Webster (1999) means, “...instrument for making or transmitting records or images,” thus ethnography is the study and systematic recording of human culture. In our case, the concern is about the study of the hip-hop musical stock, people, culture, and even a graphing of the records of the hip-hop musical genre’s originating race and movement mysticism. The earliest ethnographers are Westerners, the most famous ones were religious missionaries who went out to Christianize the world, especially to evangelize the other worlds of Africa, India, Asia, Eastern Europe, and South America. The results of perceived differences, and the fear of those differences such as color, racial features, languages, lifestyles, and environmental factors such as nature and nurture; the missionary’s perceptions being flimsy, opinionated, and faulty observed the subjects of their evangelism from a social if not physical distance.

The subjects were mistaken for non-reactive objects: They were viewed as people that seemed incapable of processing holistic data, mainly because of their initial illiteracy in context with formal Western syllabic education—they could not read, write, or speak the network, standard, or even the restricted versions of colonial languages that were

mainly English, Dutch, French, and Portuguese. These abscesses enabled the forming of false and presumptive impressions that the peoples were uncivilized, barbaric, and unintelligent, all this bias was a result of color and/or stock differentials with the racial colors of the missionaries. Therefore, modern ethnographers allude to the fact that there was much complicity rather than rapport, which signaled the re-thinking that was needed to improve, validate, and harmonize observations and reporting instrumentations.

As with handling, treating and utilizing any methodology, ethnographers often find themselves fighting between methods such as quantitative (positivistic) methods, which are the dominant approach of physical science as conceived in terms of the logic of the experiment, universal validation laws, and composite neutral observation requirements. This model is concerned with testing theories (Atkinson and Hamersley 1995) versus the qualitative (naturalistic) methods where data and findings are based mostly on subjectivity and perceptual acuity, or the lack of it, of the writer on the subject under study or investigation. The qualitative model has been founded on the premise of observations of phenomenon in his or her experience, or in still natural surroundings; on the premise of respectability and appreciative, great painter's brush impressions of the observations. The "Naturalism is the philosophical viewpoint that remains true to the combined nature and nurture of a phenomenon under study" (Matza 1969).

Denzin Norman, a leading scholar in the field of ethnographic, states that, "When in the practice of ethnography, the researcher has to 'immerse the self in the lives of the subjects as if his and her own life.'" That, "After achieving a deep understanding of the culture which though a rigorous effort, a researcher is adjudged to be successful if he and

she can produce a conceptualized reproduction and interpretation of the stories told by the concerned subjects,” and others that are in judgment-free interactions with the subjects’ ways of life and living, of nature and nurture (Norman, Vidich, and Lyman 1994, 42).

Scholars and critics have dealt with the hip-hop movement’s activities as though it were a robotic and unchanging bunch of organisms. Earlier on, this researcher endeavored to quote Tupac Shakur, who asked to be viewed as somebody capable of change, and, in his own case, he was being treated as though he was somebody who did not undergo critical change. Critics continued to judge him based on his uncomplimentary former ways of being Tupac Shakur. Hip-hop is something that continues to evolve and decay into threshold awareness, conveying an awareness-expanding venture among other popular culture musical genres.

How past ethnographers came to their conclusions by claiming to know and understand how the natives live, let alone passed down reported information to the next generation of ethnographers as authentic research data is a travesty of science. Max Horkheimer in Traditional and Critical Theory, (1930) acknowledged that traditional theory is exemplified by what is now called “foundational” theory, which is an attempt to cradle theory in simpler essentials, in central facts and in theoretical hypotheses that form the foundation of a said assumption. Horkheimer implies that because of its predisposition toward mechanistic materialism, traditional theory replicates the mechanistic mindset and practice.

Two principal voices in ethnography circles, Paul Atkinson and Martyn Hamersley have suggested four ways to rate a master scholar's use of ethnographic method: First, ethnography has a strong tendency to explore the nature of particular social phenomenon rather than of testing a hypothesis about it. Second, ethnography has the tendency to work with data that is "unstructured," or that does not fit into closed analytical categories. Third, ethnography is an investigation in detail and usually examines one social phenomenon at a time. Fourth, and finally, ethnography involves explicit interpretation of meanings and functions of human actions while quantification and statistics play subordinate roles, if any (Atkinson and Hamersley 1994).

The Afrocentric Perspective

A lot has happened to the African-centered perspective to scholarship since Maulana Karenga's Introduction to Black Studies (1982) was presented to the academic public concerning the need for a black perspective of the world, particularly in universities and colleges across the United States where racial, gender, and stock dimensionalities have presented a unique challenge to arts and science inquiries to Cultural Studies. In that groundbreaking work, one finds that Karenga lays a fresh foundation of thought and perception relating to the challenge of isolating and pointing to relevance and objectives of the development, which gave rise to Black Studies.

A concern with teaching black perspective in its proper historical condition, and, pursue replications, those Black Studies should assemble and create knowledge that

contributes gainful knowledge to the mind and freedom of thought and action to the black mind, observe the necessity to create the black think tank, the talented tenth that W. E. B. DuBois called for early in the 20th century. They were to dedicate their works and lives to the development of the black community, outside of vulgar careerism, so that those Black Studies should establish an equally beneficial relationship between the community and the campus toward a functional socio-and-psycho-linguistic integration of fine and finer values and cohesive action processes, and lastly, those Black Studies should establish themselves as a legitimately respected, prominent and permanent discipline. Although Black Studies has grown in leaps and bounds beyond these objectives, and has expanded in its scope and relevance, those ideas hold true for the Afrocentric methodology.

Asante further expanded on Karenga's Black Studies agenda, setting proposition, which he essentially introduced through doing more deep studies of Diaspora Africans in the United States. Asante argued that, "...until African-Americans are thought of in terms of African history instead of solely and disjointedly in terms of being on the periphery of Euro-American history, African history in the American experience is yet to be appropriately told" (1992). This brilliant and courageous assertion is to us the beginning of the Afrocentricity movement as a perceptual clue toward a history of the African-American from Africa into the Diaspora.

In the school of thought known as Afrocentric, the goal is to constantly seek agency and locate four main points to influence the environment (Asante 1990). And, to do so, one has to (1) identify cosmological issues dealing with origin; dealing with the natural order of the universe, space and time, culture, gender and "class" (2) implement

the epistemological issues dealing with the quest for truth and knowledge; (3) consider axiological issues relating to system of value;. (4) Finally, the centrality of aesthetic principles which, address Welsh-Asante (1985) calls the senses, otherwise treated as:

- (1) Poly-rhythm,
- (2) Polycentrism,
- (3) Dimensional,
- (4) Holism,
- (5) Epic Memory,
- (6) Repetition, and
- (7) Curvilinear.

So, some might argue that while ethnography strives to maintain objectivity in the field, because of the stricture to not contaminate the subject studied, the African-centered perspective agrees that a fair share of a researcher's influence is to be anticipated. In African-centered cultural context,, the researcher's view of the subject is one of the most important queries that must be dealt with first and foremost. It should address the issue whether or not the researcher considered the patterns and communication processes of the people studied. If this was considered, an opinions, beliefs, and behavior of the researcher one could not help but be influenced by his or her own mingling with those of the group being researched.

Donald S. Taylor and Peter O. Nwosu (1998) proposed the following African-centered cultural input model for conducting African-centered research:

- (1) Core African values, i.e., metaphysical/spiritual, communalism as opposed to individualism, time and work.
- (2) Communication units of analysis, i.e., process: source, message, channel, receiver; patterns: values, beliefs, norms and contexts; influences: history, technology, biology, ecology, and interpersonal relationships or what this researcher sums up as behavior anchors. By anchors, she means, every factor of assessment of the stimulus under consideration by a given message receiver that caused him or her to respond. This researcher has always thought that individuals, situations, and issues embody the responses that result. And,
- (3) The African-logical road maps, i.e., the matters of rhythm melodic realisms, theory-conceptualization, methodology, and interpretation have significant input factors that interact to bring about the comprehension of a message, e.g., an art form such as we have been explicating about in terms of composition intelligence, production technicalities, patterns of appreciative and critical consumption agencies, and critiques of hip-hop ways and manners.

Procedure

The author conducted long, recurrent interviews for this study. Data was collected through a combination of personal interviews, participant observations, and bibliographic resources. The interviews were conducted with 20 artists, both male and female. The

artists ranged from 17 to 34 years of age. The artists were selected on the basis of the melodies (what they address in their music, how involved they were in the community they address, and how open they were to participating in this type of research) and the perceived popularity of their works. The researcher attended functions and concerts where these artists performed. The researcher attentively listened and observed their performances. This approach was useful in streamlining the basic outlines of questions for the personal interview segments. The researcher considered this procedure as having the likelihood of helping to minimize any distractions, which could, directly or indirectly, influence an artist's performance.

Based on the initial collected information about the artists, appointments were booked for the original and follow-up interviews when necessary, which were conducted at the negotiated and agreed upon convenience of the interviewee. Interview venues included shopping malls, school premises, and other suitable locations. The interviews began with a formal introduction of the author of this study as a doctoral student at Temple University's Department of African-American Studies. This was followed by a brief explanation of the goals of the proposed research into hip-hop's mores. Once the researcher had obtained the interviewee's consent to use whatever data was discussed during the interview, the interview then continued with the scheduling of an appointment.

Interviewees were asked an open ended question and supplied with a relevant study-related questionnaire about hip-hop. Although the responses to the questions were later coded and chronicled, the results are listed below. At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked the artists for their time and cooperation in generating a body of data

for the study. The artists were told about the possibility of follow up visits, and that questions could arise spontaneously during examination of the text, and when and where gaps were discovered in the responses given, those would require the researcher to request more information to shed light on the subjects in question. The artists were generally favorably disposed to helping the search for the meanings of hip-hop as set out in the objectives of the study.

Some of the artists have required that they be identified by codes rather than by their legal or a stage name; where any of them has so requested, the researcher has understandably obliged the appeal for anonymity. The interviews were audio recorded on Maxell Professional Industrial Communicator Series P/I Cassette Low Noise/High Output c90. Later, it was transcribed into written form for classification and analysis. The author of this study has written for various magazines. Her listening to hip-hop music began several years prior to this research, but the author's concentration deepened into the necessary mindset of an attentive scholar and student that is more acute than a mere participant observer might give to attain critical analysis of data on the premise of the study's proposition. Hence being equipped as a hip-hop consumer adept, and an Afrocentric student who is well steeped in Afrocentric agency works and assumptions, adjusting to the conditions and requirements of this investigation was a less weighty effort.

Significance of the Study

The African-centered analysis of hip-hop artists' roles, themes, techniques, and contexts of composition and production is an attempt to help clarify some of the misconceptions surrounding the nature and process of the hip-hop genre. The study seeks to engage not just scholars but the hip-hop community as a whole in a critical dialog with a view to highlighting the critical stance on hip-hop performances, messages, audiences and impact

The study seeks to engage the hip-hop community toward the refining process that supports effectiveness and positive influence that will enable the artists to be part of defining of how the hip-hop persuasion works. In this study, the use of scholarly works from Africans such as Molefi Asante, Abu Abarry, Kariamuwelsh Asante, Marimba Ani, Cheikh Anta Diop, Wade Nobles, W. E. B. DuBois, Bell Hooks, Frantz Fanon, Malik El Shabazz, and Haki Madhubuti, among others has been pursued to ensure the garnering of authoritative opinions of the cultural school that informs the cultural foundations, and the roots of hip-hop.

African-centered scholarship is therefore, compulsorily used to focus this study because extant works in this area accurately portray the behavioral wellspring from which the artists draw their musical inspirations thereby energizing their worldview, and also from which the Diaspora African culture receives its cues and clues. One of the most important objectives underlying this study arose from an interest to find and uncover tools to effectively correct the misperceptions and misrepresentations woven into hip-hop

as a community of values expression, origins, artists, message design structures and themes, and its contexts of emission and transmission. This work also seeks to show what the hip-hop as a community of values expression is going through, and that it is an assortment of the reflection that attended earlier genres.

These are basic dynamic processes of prior product announcement, and of struggles and treatments that conditioned the acceptance, or diminished the circulation of older genres such as reggae, jazz, bebop, soul, the spiritual, rock and roll, and rhythm and blues, experienced before eventual recognition, authentication, respect, regards and the acceptance that is accorded them under the typically rigorous American success story traditions. In other words, hip-hop is a continuation of an adaptation and assimilation process of a cultural product, in this case, a habitation of an African roots product that has entered into the United States capitalist market grid.

This process reflects the structure of the struggles in seeking validation, acclaim and survival in the old and the modern America. In her work, *Outlaw Culture*, Bell Hooks notes that “opportunistic longings for fame, wealth, and power now lead many black critical thinkers, writers, academics, artists and intellectuals to participate in the production and marketing of black culture in ways that concur with existing structures of oppression.” That, concurrence “...begins with the equalizing of black capitalism with black self-determination” (hooks 1994, 148).

The hip-hop induction must take a long honest look at its past and present, whether it addresses what lead up to the death of Easy-E, or the healing necessary to make sure events like the death of Tupac/Biggie never happens again, or to celebrating

this generation's ability to produce more young millionaires than the African community has ever produced. This soul searching must be done within the community as a collective as well as on an individual basis in order to have a victorious outcome. As one of the newest reasonable voices in African musical expression in the United States, hip-hop has to be given the same challenge and opportunity as others have been accorded to find and free itself from the label of producing an inferior product in order to emerge exultant.

The African-centered analysis of hip-hop artists adds to the discussion of the role that hip-hop plays as an African musical expression in the United States' trans-cultural gamut. The view here is that it is unlikely critics and scholars know as much as they ought to in order to acquire thorough understanding of what the artists' works are set to accomplish: to contribute a voice to the American struggle for emancipation that would remove the extant youths' disenfranchisement, and give the artists the credit and chance to define their works. These privileges have been thus far stymied where attention to hip-hop works are concerned. Yet, their works reflect their struggles to survive and help human rights campaigns in modern and postmodern America to gain a fresh momentum and make further sense. The artists have needed to escape the persistent misperception and misrepresentation of their hip-hop works. They need recognition and respect, and they need to be for accepted for their origins. They need support from the community for their crusade as worthy artists, and they need to see that we appreciate the authenticity of their messages. In like manner, they expect us to view as inevitable the events that give

rise to contexts that warrant their involvement in the social rights crusade rapidly recurring in the social milieu in which they find themselves.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1 states the problem to be analyzed, discusses its background, reviews the literature, examines and underscores extant methodologies and data collection procedures.

Chapter 2 discusses the evolution of hip-hop and what the case of Ancestral Divine Sacrifice Linked (ADS Link) means and how it relates to hip-hop. Herein is discussed the biographies of various artists in relation to the evolution of hip-hop mores, and the significant developments in the African-American story that gave impetus to the hip-hop crusade as an offshoot of the Civil Rights movement.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the systematic analysis of themes and issues in hip-hop artists' songs in terms of data derivation techniques.

Chapter 4 looks at the various techniques used by the artists in order to achieve maximum influence effects for their works' crucial impressions upon their various audiences.

Chapter 5 is devoted to interviews and a summary, and is followed by conclusion and recommendations sections.

CHAPTER 2

THE CASE OF ANCESTRAL DIVINE SACRIFICE (ADS) LINK WORKS

The term “epic memory” was not used in this research because the researcher does not see that it applies to hip-hop. However, the term “Ancestral Divine Sacrifice Link” (ADS Link) best fits hip-hop’s evolution. Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technology transmits data over phone lines without interfering with voice services. DSL is a high-speed connection that utilizes telephone wires and is unlike the old dial-up process; the subscriber does not have to wait to logon. The idea behind DSL is linked to the processing of hip-hop’s wiring procedure, having proceeded too fast, it stands the risk of missing out on some important messages. All the same, this researcher argues that hip-hop, because of this fast process, lost the character-building opening that normally develops during an initiation ordeal.

More than half of this process was skipped over by the movement. This is not to say that hip-hoppers did not struggle, but that their learning curve may have occurred without much guidance. This is why many critics prefer to trace hip-hop’s early life in a derogatory temper, from the hood to the ghetto, or to New York’s inner city—South Bronx. Instead of linking those beginnings to their essential spiritual sources in terms of fore-parents and roots; and in terms of Continental Africa’s cultural sources in its most sentimental, hygienically pure form. And, as legend would have it, hip-hop began with

kids using their parents' albums in an attempt to imitate the artists in those records, however, with a different, hipper twist to the thus newer sound.

In, The Essential Tension in Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition of Change, (1977, 293), Thomas Kuhn proposes a prototype illustration of classes of ideas, which he attributes to a paradigm-building and paradigm-grade process which he refers to as, "fortune, revelation, key signature, received authority, and ingenuity, inventiveness on the premise upon which to determine if a pioneer achieved his and her own radical, thoroughly new idea or just a variation of an existing order form (Kuhn 1977)." Thus, in hip-hop music, we are sensing a completely new music form. Hip-hop is an example of the "old" shaping the "new" as seen in today's hip-hop disc jockey's (DJ) conduct as opposed to past years big band DJs, the hip-hop DJ is break dancing as Angola's Caporiera and Graffiti; as accent Meter Ntu. Welsh-Asante describe these connections as:

The African nommo-genius continually recreates a verbal/song art form, which remarks about a circumstance that aggressively demeans the enemy. While touching the African spirit through melody, rhythm, sound, syncopation and so forth.

Molefi Asante adds:

The voice becomes a drum; the drum becomes a bass and in the continuum of ritual insult and competition, blends into melodies like those of calypso, the dozens, soundin', ranking and rap that follows and flows into the hip-hop deep musical rivers rendering life tempestuously agog.

The case of ADS Link appears in the works of psychologist Nobles Wade as "multi-dimensional self" that widens to include all of the ancestors, the born and unborn, all of creation, the community at large, and most importantly, the "utamaroho" (cultural

life force). The link is ongoing, there is no way to see the end, but it does take an adept back to the beginning of time. Dead Prez rapped that “It’s bigger than hip-hop” (Dead Prez 2002) In African Culture: the Rhythms of Unity, Welsh-Asante wrote:

Intrinsic in this commonality is the ancestral connection to Africa through epic memory and oral tradition, even though these dances echo in different languages, people, geographies, and cultures arrive to be just one sentiment, indeed, one speech inside several languages (1985, 71).

Nothing is known to result in a vacuum; there must be a cause for anything to occur. Thus, Africa is the bonding source of African ancestry, the foundation where everything takes on an expanding and a multiplying form from time to time. In The Power of Black Music, Samuel Floyd has argued that, “all black music making is driven and permeated by memory source of things arising from a cultural past.” He said that “...recognition of the abundant viability of such memory source should play a role in the perception and criticism of works originating in that memory source” (Floyd 1995)

Transformation is triggered by a shift in prevailing locomotive conditions, which in this case has machinated hip-hop to come into being. There is nothing accidental about its causation, a happenstance that is transforming, just as a chemist is able to materialize a mixture by cooling. it. In her 1986 essay titled, The Site of Memory, Nobel Prize Winner Toni Morrison explained how she used the ADS Link initiative to create her work of fiction. And in her novel, Song of Solomon, Morrison recreates the truth of her family, particularly the messages and vivid forms of lessons she learned from her father’s death. The emergence of hip-hop in the late 1970s in New York City must have been a matter of fair memory field revelations of that which already existed in a latent format of the mind

that's within the metaphysical field of African musical thoughts as made flesh in hip-hop expressions: we are therefore talking of epic memory often manifesting in our "dry-long-soul," so to speak.

Rapping, Break Dancing, Disc Jockeying (DJ-ing)

As noted earlier, the key elements of hip-hop are: rapping, break-dancing, disc jockeying, graffiti and fashion. These elements are not in any particular order. Our work here is not to debate which genre came first, or in what particular position of manifestation it arose. The issue at hand is that we're endeavoring to successfully define and properly situate hip-hop's beginnings, and progress along a noteworthy rising path.

In his 1984 work, The Rap Attack, the British writer David Toop said that:

...hip-hop goes in cycles. The writer is aware of claims that hip-hop was started in New York City; however, that there is no hard evidence that the same thing was not happening down south or elsewhere at the same time.

This suggestion is logical, though vicious because it presupposes that no side has the legitimate claim of ownership of being the first to post hip-hop on the billboard. Evidence of such misunderstanding resurfaced in an interview with Grand Master Flash, who stated that, "we were the first to do this" (Flash 1980), but had the courage to admit they had no knowledge that New Jersey kids were doing the same thing when "Rappers Delight" became the first commercialized pop rap song.

We can find the griots' Jeli all the way from, the Nigerian griots to that of Sene-Gambian, (Jeli). No mater how far it penetrates into the twilight

maze of Japanese video games and European electronics, its roots are still deepest in contemporary Afro-American music (Toop 1984, 39, 54).

Thus griots frenzied grasp goes beyond Nigeria and Sene-Gambia. The most recent practices of griots have been traced to Nigeria, Kenya: Senegal, Gambia: and Ghana. Toop is correct in situating griots in the Continent of Africa. Toop further describes hip-hop as a “form of entertainment expression that has been around for years and has been manifested in dancing, fashion, graffiti, disc jockeying, and schoolyard rapping.” (Toop 1984, 54). The term “schoolyard” was loosely used in reference to kool. Herc, the founding father of disc jockeying in the formative years of hip-hop, who would:

...Roll up in a van with turntables and records. A crowd of kids waited, after lugging his equipment into the base of a streetlight. Herc tried some beats from Bongo Rock and Shaft in Africa and in other obscure records until well after dusk (Nelson George 1994, 144)

Like other genres before hip-hop, whether they were born on the Continent of Africa or in Diaspora Africa, remain what they are: African musical expressions in modern times. Hip-hop borrows its form, context, style, and character from the traditions that came before it. In his book, Race Music, Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. echoes this process of revision in black music to enable them to display the common unity and continuity that unifies the African people.

Mdu Neter a.k.a. Hieroglyphic a.k.a. Graffiti

An Afrocentric scholar locates a subject for the purpose of tracing, what I call Ancestral Divine Sacrifice Links’ history, then situates and links it to its Continental and

to Diaspora African roots and sources in a reconstructive, rehabilitative spirit of commitment. The action command of ‘retrieve, dust-up, inspect, treat, redress, restore, and rejoin phenomena that have been, over time and across terrain threshold experiences, incidents-hazards-and-conditions severed. In the 1960s, during the very tense period of the Black Art Revival movement, the artists came to understand that power and definition lie in the point of view of the definer. This is what Molefi Kete Asante means when he says:

...Definitions tend to be based on the position and perspective of the person doing the defining; that, the European scholar often looks at Europe for his and her examples of phenomena, for what he and she knows and tries to use it as a standard for determining and evaluating the durability and functionality of other cultures. (M. K. Asante 1990)

Moreover, in Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge, (1980) Asante argued that the world owes a debt of gratitude to kemetite legacy for the birth of Mdu Neter (hieroglyphics), which was given to the world over 6,000 years ago. The phrase Mdu Neter means the divine word of the Creator and the Holy Scriptures. Euro-centric scholars such as Ong, Stubbs, and Olson believe that writing is what made human beings superior and civilized. Stubbs went further to add, “Without writing, science and history are inconceivable, since at one stroke, writing overcomes the limitations of human memory” (1980).

Nevertheless, the truth of the matter is that the world, and in this case, the hip-hop movement, owes a debt of gratitude to the kemetite foundation for our pictorial-ideogram method of ciphering information such as hieroglyphs, and graffiti. Pictogram is a system of paintings, drawings and shaping displayed on humans, structures, paper, cloth and

metal, thus representing the world. The ideogram has the same character, including the carving and generating of ideas. However, Mdu Neter is more symbolic in nature, but implies in the matter of its usefulness as a guiding light that are in time memories which have conduced to the construct of the “dry-long-soul.”

The ideogram is literal, while the pictogram is more abstract. It is not a secret that the classical kemetic writing system has been an inspiration to many world systems of writing. Well-known borrowers of kemetic’s method are the Greek and Latin scripts. While some scholars in their attempts to disregard this influence have characterized and played down the Kemetic Mdu Neter’s essence as being “primitive” and as being “child like.” Asante articulates the issue this way:

There are two problems in this interpretation of African graphic system as (1) The conscious attempt to isolate Egypt, Ethiopia and Meroe (Nubia) from the rest of Africa, and (2) the promulgation of the view that Africans never invented a writing system. (Asante 1990, 72)

Graffiti is dancing all over the place as if saying, ‘I am here, erase me, pull me down, but I still regenerate.’ Interestingly enough, 1970 brought the first recorded case of graffiti found tagged on New York City’s public trains, and was credited to a brave heart that went by the name of “Taki 183.”

The New York Times (1982)and then mayor John V. Lindsay embarked on a war on graffiti found displayed on public property, especially the trains. In Los Angeles, the war against graffiti took on a more severe dimension morphing into penal code 594. The war was to wipe out graffiti and penalize its artists. To date, in New York City alone, over 300 million dollars have been spent on the campaign to kill graffiti. The public,

mostly white and middle class non-white people supported this campaign without even attempting to recognize these artists' works. However, later, a twist of perception resulted in graffiti attaining artwork value: A million dollars was paid for a graffiti painting sold in an exclusive New York art gallery. The question is one of whether or not there would have been a public outcry with supportive intervention, if it had been known that Taki 183 was of Greek descent not African or African Latino.

No one knows.

Robert Armstrong explains cultural behavior appropriation in his work:

Wellspring: On the Myth and Source of Culture:

...Is strong, viable, subtle, inescapable, and pervasive in operating behind each possibility of man's relationship with the world, in refracting through each sense and each faculty by means of terms deemed appropriate to them? (Armstrong 1975)

In an African-centered community of values, the outcry would not have been like that of Mayor Lindsay calling these young artists, "insecure cowards seeking recognition." Instead, the people would have worried that the artists would get hurt or electrocuted while climbing electrical poles and walking on electrically charged train tracks.

Disc Jockeying a.k.a. Spinning the Record a.k.a. Big Band

"Old school, new school, no school rules" (Nas and Olu Dare, "Bridge the Gap," 2004).

In trying to make sense of this very major part of the hip-hop validity debate without discussing the disc jockey is like taking Kemet out of Africa, or hip-hop out of the African musical art form. In 1970, a young man by the name of Kool Herc, an African from Diaspora Africa, West Indies' Jamaica is said to have set up shop playing his parents' old records on the playgrounds of schools in New York City. Kool Herc is known to many of his fans as the father of DJ-ing, mainly because of his very public displays of DJ-ing, which he practiced with finesse and commitment through orderly presentations of this talent. Herc was known principally for his style of break dancing beats, which he termed, "the poor person's cut and paste technology" (Stephens 1996, 2). As for its style of blending, one only has to be present at a hip-hop show to see how great DJ's method of mixing has the audience under what looks to be a hypnotic spell. In an interview with Kool Herc, he recalled his inspiration to create his original resounding effects in this manner:

I would give people what I know they want to hear. And I would watch the crowd and I was seeing everybody on the sidelines waiting for particular breaks in the records. I said to myself, let me put a couple of these records together that got breaks in them. I did it. Boom! Boom!! Boom!!! Boom!!!! I try to make it sound like a record. The place went berserk. They loved it (Brewster and Broughton 2000).

James Brown's "Give It Up or Turn It Loose" is what the hip-hop audience loved to hear, it is a familiar love affair cliché; something with which they were familiar, but in this case, it has come with a different spin. Here, it came very natural with the DJ Kool Herc, where we witness what Ramsey states as, "a continual historical conversation,

collecting important aspects of its meaning from dialogues between the present happenings and tales from the past” (2003).

Three major styles of DJ formed mixer-influences emerged at this time in hip-hop DJ-ing as created by Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash and Afrika Bambaataa. Herc created the break beats, a collage of instrumental breaks from obscure records; a style in which the DJ chops up beats by spinning the records or instrument back and forth so as to miss the words and only have the beats sound.

Flash perfected his style of turntable DJ-ing, where he would rub the needles against the groove, then allow the record to play normally. The sounds that this mixture provides would either go with or against the beat of a second record. Today, computer programming reproduces similar sounds, but which are less invigorating and least original when compared to the raw original of Flash’s ingenuity. Writer, Mike Freedberg referred to Flash’s style of spins as masterpiece, the “T-Jazz,” because he was impressed with the improvisational jazz presence in Flash’s native talent in disc jockeying. Of course, some other examiners have called Flash’s style of ancestral blending, “the scavenger culture” (Kemp 1992). Although Kemp thought of hip-hop this way, everyone learns from his or her parents, and doing so does not make them thieves because they are, in essence, inheritors.

Afrika Bambaataa gave us the beat box, made as an electronic percussion, in which he combined computer and electronics beats with street or soul sounds. Later ,he called his group “Soul Sonic Force” in honor of his technologically sourced DJ creations.

To illustrate how much the hip-hop genre still continues to boost its self-esteem from its ADS Link, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, and Kool Herc, the trio being “fathers of disc jockeying” and “grandfathers of hip-hop,” always borrowed records from the crates. “The most highly respected rap producers are they that are reputed in playing, “the phat beats” or “catchy hooks” (Lena 2003). And because most hip-hop productions lack live instruments, the producers have used pre-recorded music to get that sound. The exception is a group like Philadelphia’s own “The Roots,” whose members all play instruments. Bill Stephaney, member of the Bomb Squad, emphasized how important it is to be authentic when producing a hip-hop album:

(Real Producers) hate digital drums. They like their snares to sound as if it has been recorded in a large live row. But you readily cannot replicate those sounds. Maybe it’s the way engineers’ mike; maybe it’s the lack of baffles in the room. Who knows? But that’s why these kids have to go back to the old records. (Rose 1994)

It is no accident that hip-hop youths sampled from the generations that came before them. The best DJs, all range from Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, Lovebug, Grand Master Theodore, Rich Medina, Tony Touch, Kid Capri, Questlove, Scratch, Mark Ronson, Swizz Beatz, Buzz, Fuzz, DJ Ran, DJ Premier, Green Lantern, through DJ Quik have been reported to have dug into the crates for their source of musical raw materials.

In a product arrival announcement-type interview with Marie Dauline, founder of the musical group “Zap Mama,” during the release of the explosive “Ancestry in Progress” (2004), and in trying to put to rest any misconceptions about the birth of hip-

hop as a world music, especially as a Diaspora African-American music thus reclaiming and proclaiming Africa's rich influences on hip-hop notes, Dauline explains that:

The American beat is a revolution all over the world, everybody listens to it; and everybody follows it. But the beat of the United States was inspired by the beat coming from Africa. Not just in its structure, but in the sound of it.... This is the source of modern sounds.... This is the history of the beat, starting from little pieces of wood banging against one another, and arriving to the big sound-systems of today. It's genius. So I wanted to create an album about the evolution of old ancestral beats and how they traveled from Africa, mixing with European and Asian sounds, and were brought to America. (Dauline, July 2004)

“The coded familiarity of the rhythms and “hooks” that rap samples from other black music carries with it the power of black collective memory” (Rose 1991). The new jack, new school, hip-hop's next expression gets to re-live these forgotten memories while, “The original version takes on a new life and a new meaning in a fresh context” (Hebdige 1987). Like many other movements prior to its time, hip-hop is slowly taking its place in the African musical temple by finding itself in the midst of all its contradictions, struggles, and the use of its ADS Link system that enables it to remain an African musical expression in the United States. Such is irrespective of the profuse negative publicity and criticisms that attempt to give hip-hop obliterating attention much of the time.

Rap and Hip-Hop

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:1, 14)

Chuck D of “Public Enemy” once called rap and hip-hop the Black Cable News Network, “CNN.” By using the term “CNN” to compare rap and hip-hop influences upon Black America, he means to not only promote rap and hip-hop, but to do so in a way that emphatically promotes the level of quality of rap and hip-hop by persuading Black Americans to accept ideas that they receive through the network channels of rap and hip-hop intellectually as being meaningful and valuable. Chuck D is saying that like the news station CNN— many white audiences consider CNN to be international in its broadcasting influence gains, thus, analogously, Chuck was pointing out that hip-hop incidentally and coincidentally serve the significant purpose of broadcasting correct and accurate events of black lives to a wide variety of audiences that listen to and consume on hip-hop news air.

Hip-hop has therefore been labeled the “CNN” of black people because it speaks about events in the black community with greater quality than are transmitted from the standpoint and policy of black perspective as does the station CNN. The distinction was thus implied when it was said that CNN’s(hip-hop’s) news air is not like those of the other news casting stations such as the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), and the FOX news air, which are national

broadcasting stations that, to the voice of the people, appear by their ways of carrying out their news airing business, are in the pockets of private owners. Hip-hop evidently serves as the channel for reporting injustices, hardships and good times. The reason that hip-hop is under attack is, as Mamrimba Ani brilliantly exhibits in Yurugu (1994) that the African culture and psychological creative mind have been under attack because of this European concept of looking at people outside of the European culture-band as lesser “others.” This idea of lesser “others” allows the European the ability to misuse, mistreat, and attach the downgrading collar on other cultures that coincidentally are a lot more scriptural than can be said about the spirit and letter of how we observe aspects of our holy books and in our handling of human affairs at home and abroad. Ani says that:

It was important to the system of white supremacy that (1) white people continually reinforce their European consciousness at the expense of the other cultures’ images such as the Africa [Asia and Arab] cultures’ images, i.e., through our degradations, and, (2) that the Africans continue to act like “slaves” of a new sort and indeed have become what Europeans portray of them. The objective of the European was thwarted to the degree that an African consciousness has sustained among peoples of African descent that allowed them to reject the Europe-created image of them. (Ani 1994, 294)

Hip-hop may have, as a rhythmic term, come from the word Bebop. Of course, these were both disregarded and underrated art forms until they became the eye-balls of America pop cultures’ blinkless pastime. Whether the term “hip-hop” came from bebop is yet to be ascertained by scientific and cultural investigations. Bebop and rap were always considered to be “street culture” art forms for their being loud and wild; not allowing these to be understandable displays commonly subsisting as response regimes attached to musical stimulations. For instance, commentators such as the hip-hop writer,

Nelson George, and mainstream America such as the school principal mentioned earlier who strongly disdained hip-hop, but exempted Eminem as being a superfluous hip-hop artist whose compositions he had listened to time and again. Nelson, however, feels that rap “does not deserve the link” to enduring quality music, by which he is alluding to the blues, jazz and the spirituals. Nelson tries to make his point seem a lot more credible by telling a story about Leonie James, a Howard University student, who was told by his professor that, “it’s fantastic how much bad taste the blues contain” (Nelson 1985). It is safe to say that even the biggest cheerleader of this movement is able at times to be as ambiguous about where he or she thinks rap belongs and where it is heading. Hip-hop is not the only heartbeat of the African musical expression that is constantly in the process of reinventing itself. Although under regular attack by many critics, hip-hop has more to offer in terms of variety of its expressive outlets; it should be spared minimizing attacks and receive support that allows it the necessary time to grow into its place in both the African and United States musical expressions.

In New York’s widely read tabloid, The Village Voice (1981), an article was written by a critic who was attempting to understand this music and thus alluded that rap was originally born of kids evolving their own social networks who were sojourning from crew to karate clubs, making their own dances, writing and rendering their own poetry and music, all in an effort to make harsh, crude, often incomprehensible city life a livable environment, as such hip-hop is fashioned by those kids who in the main, have conclusively been deemed cast out of the status quo’s upward mobility “high hills.” [*sic*] (Banes 1981). While Banes and other liberal well-wishers have been fair in admitting that

these African children were not included in the status quo's mainstream social growth and development plantings of society, or social mobility structures, that it never occurred to the "System," to consider the backgrounds of these children's first impressions and how they were formed: from their parents' playing jazz, blues, the spirituals, rock, bebop and soul music in the home. Ani concludes that:

The European [mind] responds to (hip-hop music in) precisely the same way as it responds to every other kind of phenomena presented to it [for an opinion; they have responded with condemnation not with appreciation nor with the attitude and consequent behavior of one that's a learner of a new idea] Music was analyzed, dissected, 'studied,' and translated into a, predisposed, negatively skewed language of mathematical equation. (Ani 1994, 210)

Hip-hop's music may be narrowed down solely to the issue of the difference between thought provoking verses versus the method and attitude of provoking the thought and not the thoughts being provoked by hip-hop's miscalled awkwardness. Not all of these youths were born in the miscalled ghetto. Recent research conducted on the backgrounds of these youths show that many of them hail from upper class families.

Ghetto is not necessarily a synonym for being "poor." This is unfortunately due to the lack of finer knowledge of political and cultural English, which has led scholars of social change and shapers of policy to remain attitudinally shaped in a deliberately dishonest sense of the broad differences that should be noted between being poor and being from the ghetto. Yet, we teach and research social processes that restrict our language use as regards to being poor against the sheer fate of coming from the ghetto.

When first he arrived on the scene the rapper known as "Vanilla Ice" was told to lie about his background because the record companies and mainstream America equate

rappers with being poor blacks from the ghetto. The mindset was that he could not be from a comfortable family and be able to intuitively emit and translate his experiences and expect to rise as a competent rapper. Some of the reasons for this ideology include the channels through which rap entered and proliferated in public view rather rapidly in the 1980s. Then rap spread its messages on various levels that were unprecedented for the lineage in a hostile environment.

The frenzy was so quick it had white America hurrying to lock their doors and offices in order to ensure that this noise was prevented from corrupting their children. Paradoxically, what resulted is that their children brought into the household sounds of Sugar Hill Gang's "Rappers' Delight," and Furious Five, and Grandmaster Flash's "The Message." The Message was a bone chilling but beautifully arranged song about unemployment, self-respect, cultural pride, hunger, racism, and the wretchedness of living in America. The lyrics were instructive in that they warned the powers that be to:

Don't push me 'because I'm close to the edge, I'm tryin' not to lose my head. It's like a jungle; sometimes it makes me wonder how I keep from goin' under. (The Message, 1979)

It seems pertinent here to ask what jungle Furious Five is rapping about. After all, the Furious Five were born on American soil, where everything is portrayed as near perfect, where everyone is beautiful and kind to one another. Nevertheless, there were brutal images in this song and others like it, critics and mainstream America still alludes that from the beginning of time rap was only about having fun and partying. "Rappers' Delight" (1979), composed by the Sugar Hill Gang was charted as the first rap song on the Billboard of the Rhythm and Blues singles chart at the same time only because of the

way the charting of the songs was structured. We mean this to be a specialty pattern because of the so-called remark that it was, “unlike a black music.” This song may not have been the first rap song, even if it was labeled that way. After all, rap music has been, and for a long time has remained, in the periphery of mainstream music. As Tricia Rose so well articulated: “...that old heads of rappers in the Bronx claimed they have never heard of Sugar Hill Gang and could not believe the success of the rap” (Rose 1998). Therefore, if the Bronx is said to be the birthplace of hip-hop, why then is a group like Sugar Hill Gang from New Jersey considered to have the first rap song in history? Later Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five would record “The Message” under the same label owned by Sylvia Robinson. The context of their music is clearly defiant, as defiant as Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On,” and as much as Brother D’s (with Collective Effort), “How We Gonna Make the Black Nation Rise.” And as carefree as the hooks of Kurtis Blow’s “8 Million Stories,” or Run-DMC’s “Hard Times” such a trend of defiance rhetoric these releases were talking about subsistent, scratching the earth for a living for the background of being black, not of being poor in America.

The truth about hip-hop is that like its forebears and their trials and tribulations, it still was able to maintain African musical elements of fowl times’ rude, rhythmic complexity and metaphoric styles, so loaded and underlying in a typical African reactive, the battle is declared, cordon-the-roads, thaw not the relationship, libretto. In not being able to break this code of unique, same-same flavor frustrates the miscalled critics, who feel bamboozled by cultural ingenuity, and the masterpiece performances of black

musical art forms, from genre to genre, and from brand name to brand name, and from artist to artist, irrespective of gender, class, or locale.

Professor Henry Louis Gates would have us believe that rappers go out of their way to code most of their lines in their work as we saw with “2 Live Crew, Decoded.” And most rappers might be employing the ancestral ADS Link by being true to the African-American vernaculars of “Signifying” and “playing the dozens.”

On the other hand, for the most part, hip-hop has not had to write in codes a majority of its contents as much as prior genres. For instance, KRS-One, who most audiences know as the “Teacher,” in one of the most notable songs in the hip-hop group’s “MCs act like they don’t know” raps Now we got white kids calling themselves niggers. The tables turn as the crosses burn. Remember you must learn.” The tradition of griot is alarmingly present in these lyrics. However, the need to code the message about “white kids now calling themselves niggers,” is now extinct. The tables have turned, the rappers are now getting the money, and are now in charge of the means of making their money. Even here, rappers are “the bosses,” and “the matters” of the fields of corporate America’s entertainment industry. Another very plain rap that portrays life and promotes change in American styles of living is one by the well circulated, Notorious B. I. G’s “Things Done Changed,” where he raps,

Back in the day our parents used to take care of us,
Look at them now; they’re even fuckin’ scared of us.
Calling the city for help because they can’t maintain,
Damn, shit done changed! (Notorious, 1996)

There was a time in hip-hop when most of the materials were solely metaphoric driven. As an example, in the early 1990's when AIDS approached a little too close to the hip-hop movement's district that people were made a lot more aware of the season of serial death. It did not stop people from having sex, but within some of the music, people recognized the need for caution that said, "Why do we have to hide in and disguise ourselves? Let's show it all." Yet, "I have no doubt that the outspokenness—be it political or apolitical—that is so discernible, it is not difficult to perceive it that hip-hop today is the residual effect of the bluntness of the latter part of the Civil Rights Movement" (Powell 2003, 101-102). Most hip-hop artists maintain the thought-provoking stance in their works' flow, lyrics, charm, gait, expressiveness, and intelligence.

Hip-hop is not too big to be criticized, yet it is only fair that it be done by those who know best how to explicate, respect and embody the movement, and who comprehend and understand its cultural background. It is important that hip-hop's critics be not only be objective, but subjective at the same time. Despite the fact that it is rooted in classical African musical expression, hip-hop is still the hype of youthful Americas' that the Continental African youths admirably perceive it to be the case of a Diaspora African-American creation, yet, in its being youthful, it still leaves room for falling and getting back up. "Black Thought" of "The Roots" sees this stage of hip-hop as:

Yo, yo
Lost generation, fast paced nation
World population confront they frustration
The principles of true hip-hop have been forsaken
It's all contractual and about money makin'

Pretend-to-be cats don't seem to know they limitation
Exact replication and false representation
You wanna be a man, and then stand your own
To emcee requires skills. I demand some shown. (Black Thought, 1997)

Fashion Seen in the Hip-Hop Musical Region

While most are concerned with the amount of money, time and emphasis that most hip-hop artists squander on themselves, these excessive preoccupations with appearance by the artists come from the increasing commercialization of the hip-hop musical business. Major corporations have been courting hip-hop artists in order that the artists will incorporate and advertise their various brand names in the production of songs, seeing that hip-hop music rallies a large youth market. Richard Jinman of The Guardian newspaper reported that:

The fast-food giant is reported to be launching a campaign that will offer financial incentives to rap artists who mention its Big Mac burger in their lyrics. McDonalds does not pay an upfront fee, but it intends to pay the artist between \$1 and \$5 each time a track is played on the radio in the form of the "unit trust" manner of involving in affairs of large youths market promos. It hopes to have several such songs on the airwaves by the summer (Jinman 2005)

Therefore, the business-oriented artists like Jay-Z, Sean "Puffy" Combs, Kanye West will unfortunately take advantage of this opening to make money, and the majority of the artists will not see a penny from these corporate brand name engagements because:

A lot of the artists are not educated or know about the business end. And it's about the way you represent yourself, and the much you want to compromise. If you do not know how to negotiate, you wearing some one else clothing and you become a walking billboard for Sort Company and different designers or stuff like that. If you start doing that, you need to

have some sort of proposal together and talk with your team and management or attorney draw up contracts. Giving up free promotion, too many of our artists act before we think. We are still not looking at it as a business. (Bahamadia 2001)

It was reported in American Brands, a research project of Agenda Inc., a pop culture brand strategy agency based in San Francisco, that a new way of understanding how brands function in the fast-paced pop culture depends on different criteria than does traditional brand management and brand tracking in pop culture. A new key area in brand strategy is the hip-hop movement. The artists have the right to define their music and what they do with their music. It is more important that this work shines a brighter light on the good and not so good sides of this movement. All the same, the “name dropping” as they call it in hip-hop, is one of the negative preoccupations that most hip-hop artists feel they need to have in order to feel worthy. In 2004, the report showed that several different brand names were mentioned in rap songs.

The winning brand in 2005 is Cadillac, over last year’s winner Mercedes. Cadillac won by just one point after moving ahead of Hennessy in the final week of 2004. Runners up are Hennessy, Mercedes, Rolls Royce, and Gucci. The rapper who dropped the most names was Kanye West, who mentioned several brands in his four singles of 2004. He beat the 2003 winner, 50 Cent, who dropped to seventh place. No women were in the top five this year, although Lil’ Kim and Missy Elliott both scored strongly in 2003. In 2004 the bling moved from fashion to a wider range of categories. Fashion brands fell significantly from 494 to 281 (N = -213); car brands narrowly fell back from 476 to 449 (N = -27). While beverage brands jumped remarkably from 172 to 251 (N =

+79). A striking trend in 2004 was the big rise in cross-category luxury brands. Another unexpected trend in 2004 was said to be the rise in weaponry name dropping. The weapons count jumped slightly from 11 mentioned in 2003 to 53 in 2004 (N = +42). Songs had more brand name contents in 2004 than in 2003. There have been 105 songs overall in the Billboard Top 20 this year. Of these, 42 songs, or 40 per cent mentioned at least one brand name which was slightly higher than in 2003 where 111 songs were charted and 43 contained brand names, or 38.7 per cent. The largest number of brand names in a single week of the Billboard Top 20 was on June 12 with 33 brand names. The one song with the most brand names mentioned was "Overnight Celebrity" by Twista, which mentioned 9 brand names. The year 2004 has seen familiar brand names returning, but also contained an ad-mix of newcomers that include Rolex, Dom Perignon, MTV, and Victoria's Secret. In addition, several brand names fell out of favor in 2004 after multiple mentions in 2003. Brand names not mentioned this year include Burberry, Prada, and Manolo Blahnik. Brand name dropping is still overwhelmingly a hip-hop pitfall. The year 2005 saw low-rent hotels and motel chains enter the mix, with the Hampton Inn winning, followed by Holiday Inn, with Days Inn trailing behind. The motel chain lyric of 2004 was:

I'm in a rental today/It's going down at the HAMPTON INN and I
remember the way/less money we spend on bullshit, the more for the weed
(Slow Motion, Juvenile)

The traditional brands name dropping battle plays out in the brand chart. In one reckoning, Pepsi beat Coca-Cola in rap artist, 50 Cent's hip-hop cocktail of the year:

You mix a little Coke with a little Don Perignon/and a little
Hennessey/You know we fine to carry on (Disco Inferno, 50 Cent)

Cadillac had an excellent year in the Billboard chart and was number one for 30 weeks. In 1999, it was reported that when asked what they were going to do with their first check, NFL draftees stated they would buy an Escalade. The owners of Cadillac were reported to have been surprised over the attention they've received from artists like Young Buck:

I got plenty of room if you think you wanna roll/See this is that they make
CADILLAC trucks for/Let's go to a place you ain't never been. (Shorty
Wanna Ride, Young Buck)

And "Get Back" by artist Ludacris:

So, so, come on, come on/don't get swung on, swung on/It's the knick-
knack-patty-whack still riding CADILLAC/Family off the streets, made
my homies put the baggies back. (Ludacris 2005)

Hennessey is another brand name that has managed to upgrade its relevance to achieve huge success. In 2005, Hennessey received more than double the number of references it achieved in 2003. Hennessey started being mentioned in the early days of Tupac Shakur. The favorite Hennessey rhyme of the year 2005 is:

I like how them Victoria's Secrets sit in that ass/Lemme pour some more
HP (NOTIQ) and Hennessey in your glass ("Slow Motion", Juvenile)

During 2005, Mercedes has had to share its glory with a wider range of transportation brand names than ever before, most notably Maybach. Some hip-hoppers are being lured toward the old money appeal of the Rolls Royce brand, but it was not until Jay-Z's "Change Your Clothes," that Rolls Royce began to pick up speed in the brand names stands' chart. Together with Bentley, Rolls Royce is said to have begun to

appear as the tenor of hip-hop and has become more “gentrified” and less defined by new money. Gucci moved up two places, while Jaguar barely made a dent in the brand names stands’ chart in 2004; its success in 2004 was thanks to Usher and Jadakiss. Chevrolet is said to be one of the most optimistic brand names in the Billboard chart over the last three years. Cristal held the number 7 spot in 2004. By 2005, both Moet Chandon, and Dom Perignon started quickly moving up the chart as the year progressed. The reason being that they are rare, distinctive, and perceived to be the most expensive. Favorite Cristal lyric of the year was:

Look I’m a CRISTAL nigga, and you a red-winer/You just an opening act, but I’m the headliner (“Game Over “, Lil’ Flip)

Lets return to where we began, so that we can tie up two strands of the ADS Link memorial history of elements of hip-hop. We’ve opened this chapter by introducing the definition of ADS Link and showing how it is best used to define the hip-hop movement’s works on account of various missing links to the birth and growth of the hip-hop movement. We then merged into tracing and examining the current elements that are present in hip-hop, as much juxtaposing these with elements in African musical expressions prior to the operative elements. The reason for this was to activate awareness about what we might have forgotten about ourselves, the backgrounds of hip-hop in relation to where we are today. Chapter 3 will throw more light on our understanding of what happens as a result of the breakdown in traditional practices. We consider that doing so, will sharpen our minds about the works of the hip-hop artists.

CHAPTER 3
SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THEMES AND ISSUES

“Music is a sentimental thing arising from a spiritual well.
You don’t play with music.
If you play with music, you will die young”
— Femi Kuti

Modern Day Jeli (Griot): Techniques and Artistry

It is very important that the world, hip-hop artists, and hip-hop scholars view hip-hop artists as the modern day griot in order for the artists to be able to:

...maintain meaningful inquiry rooted in strict interpretation of their place in life’s struggles. This is in order to subdue and void all naive racial theories and go ahead with works of establishing (hip-hop) as a legitimate response to the strife in human conditions. (Asante 1990)

Hip-hop artists must put forth effort to overcome the roadblocks set forth by society that are both conscious and subconscious that they could inadvertently set up to inhibit themselves. They must find this courage in order to properly respond to the Diaspora African challenges here in the United States. Steve Chambers of Steve Chamber’s Band expressed it best when he noted that:

One of the essential functions of black cultural movement is first to crystallize the ever-present cultural elements of black experience, and then

to implement programs that will project these elements to the world scene, to bring about the re-ordering and re-dedication of a people's destiny in regard to their spiritual, and moral article. (Chambers 1980)

In traditional West African society, a griot is an individual that keeps the record of his community's daily activities. The griot is given the power to construct how history is displayed and relayed. The griot also has the power to change the course of history. Griots are given the rights and the privilege to use any word deemed fit to express the daily happenings of the community. The craft of griot requires eloquence, and composed thoughts and perspectives. It is also important that each craftsman learn to use traditional motifs in new ways to generate grammar or grammars, e.g., case, voice, parts or figures of speech. The griot helps the community at large to tell their stories clearly, with knowledge, emphasis and clarity of mind. Some modern-day griots like Wannabe Gangsta rappers have not fully lived up to this standard of eloquence, nor have they used their endowment of musical talent to facilitate the uplifting of America's Diaspora African community. Some of these modern day "gangsta rappers" have instead aided and abetted the distortion of events, perpetuated negativity and hypocrisy, and have participated in the conduct of evil over their fellow griots and community. Talib Kweli of Black Star describes this displacement by many hip-hop artists:

Myself because I had two parents who are educators, who ensured that, I was in school. On weekends I was doing things and I knew,... I loved reading. Also, I was doing things like traveling. I was blessed! Not everybody is blessed like I am! Most of us are not blessed like that. So, it's like we have to build with people from where they are and not from where we think they should be. (Kweli 2000)

An equally talented female hip-hop artist, EMCEE Bahamadia adds:

My background, I think they would be surprised if they took a look at who I am. First of all, I came from a really dysfunctional family. But all of it is, you know what I mean. I was a juvenile delinquent when I was growing up. My life is totally different from how it's portrayed in the industry. (Bahamadia 2000)

Unlike traditional West African griots that are trained or born into their roles, many modern day rappers (griots) lack the training required to benefit the whole community. When interviewed about his role at Death Row records, the Philadelphia-born rapper, Kurupt claimed, "I am trying to improve on my executive game and not just MCing" (Kurupt 2004). Because of his drive to better himself as an EMCEE and catering to his responsibility to other young emcees following him, Kurupt produces what ancient Africa called *mdw nfr*: beautiful speech.

To master one's *nfr* as the ancient Jeli did, Kurupt saw the need for other MCs following him to be trained:

They respect my position and are willing to take constructive criticism. I get their rhymes together. I give them all the game. I help them find the right beats and the whole nine. My job is to create ultimate MCs. I groom. I shape. It's called the art of poetics. I teach them that. (William 2004, 17)

Miscalled Gangsta Rap

Rude and honest, Gangsta rap first surfaced in the popular culture arena in the early 1980s. Gangsta rap keeps it real, so to speak, and because what was real to mainstream America was quite a social distance from how most of the Diaspora African community lived, gangsta rap arrived as a shock to many social values auditors in mainstream American society. Douglas Kellner stated that:

Music is the most nonrepresentational of all arts; it provides vehicles for the expression of pain, rage, joy, rebellion, beauty, love, withdrawal, and so forth, which have progressive effects.

Historically, the production of certain types of popular music was often carried out by working class whites or marginalized youths.... Music thus articulates rebellion against standardization, and conformity. (Kellner 1989)

Prior to appearing in the mainstream, gangsta rap was simply known as fast-talking. No one cared what happened in the rap community, or how many people died in the black community as a result of this music until rap became a 33 billion dollar economic and financial force. It did not concern the white community because music is a:

Mirror that reflects the reality so the society is enabled by it to come face to face with its true self... so that society can come to see itself from all angles and be enabled to see what abounds for it within each angle. Reality cannot be cut up in neat little categories. (Osayande 12)

This hip-hop reality was not a threat to mainstream life. However, it all went awry when young suburban white children were introduced to gangsta rap in the early 1990s, the era of MTV marketing that co-opted rap actions such as Run DMC, LL Cool J, and Fresh Prince of Bel-Air into their programs which made all the difference to the explosion of hip-hop's popularity. The first so-called gangsta rap label that came out was Ruthless Records with the group Niggas with Attitudes (N.W.A.). N.W.A. released "Straight Outta Compton," which talked about police beating young black children in California, and living poor and having to sell drugs as a result of hard conditions. And because information is suppressed by the will of the powers that be, the larger question arises that concerns the issue of, why did the Government allow a group such as N.W.A.

to be exposed to a large audience after their blatant condemnation of the government and the American society?

Therefore, for someone that is totally ignorant of African people's history of being brutalized, in particular, the ill-treatment meted out to various black movement groups, N.W.A. was seen as "rebellious," and indeed, as being rebellious toward mainstream America, which implication often means being "radical," or being "lesser other." Otherwise, why was N.W.A's message not a threat? The government's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), has infringed upon the black power movement, but did not bother with gangsta rap because it was spinning money for corporate America, and in corporate America, money talks. N.W.A. and other groups with similar economic and financial viability were making money for the economy than any other music of this time. At first, "Straight Outta Compton" album sales was slow, but as soon as the media got their hands on it and gave it negative rave reviews and exposure, it appreciated like gold that week.

In an interview with reporter, Shelia Rules, MC Ren of N.W.A said, "Stuff we were saying on records we were saying since 1987 and 1988, telling about police brutality, but nobody wanted to listen" (MC Ren 1999). This may provide further evidence of the link between bebop and hip-hop, because in the 1960s, which is the era of jazz and bebop, Langston Hughes had, through his fictional Harlem man on the street, Simple said:

You must not know where Bop comes from, was the observation made by Simple, who was astonished about modern people's ignorance of matters of such nature. 'I do not know,' I said. 'Where did bop originate?' He

replied, 'From the police.' 'What do you mean, from the police?' 'From the police beating Negroes' heads, every time a cop hits a Negro with his billy club, that old club says, 'BOP! BOP! ... BE-BOP! ... MOP ... BOP! ...' that's where Be-Bop came from, beaten right out of some Negro's head into those horns and saxophones and the piano keys that play it.... Folks who ain't suffered much cannot play Bop, neither can appreciate it. They think Bop is nonsense like you. (Hughes 1960)

Michael Eric Dyson, professor of history and a cultural critic, tried to diagram the phases of hip-hop, rap and gangsta rap. He placed gangsta rap between 1988 and 1996, with artists such as N.W.A., Ghetto Boys, and Ice Cube—who is also a member of N.W.A. The lyrics of these artists, for the most part, were honest and blunt though they were disrespectful toward women and society. Some critics still question whether this bebop, mop-bop era was ever consciously noticed. The reason for this doubt is that gangsta rap brought much more visible forms of sexism and misleading notions to the forefront than other genres of music videos and lyrics.

Innumerable fans and concerned families of these artists wondered if the ills of American society should be blamed on rappers, including for example, the violence against women. For as it seems, violence appears to be the usual accompaniment of the uncompromising social, political and economic change process, whereby women have combined rebelliousness and emancipation campaigns at all levels of social relations; in the home, workplace, houses of worship, court system, executive and legislative government, the corporate world, and in academia. Women assert their Civil Liberty and Human Rights Proclamation stances attracting to them a measure of violence. The rappers could not have been the cause, even as we admit that the spoken word of rapping is a rude, if vulgar reminder to society that all is not well with the way society has been

transacting its rights and liberties business. Violence is pandemic in any society where consciously and deliberately people's human rights and privileges are abridged. Someone must speak in favor of the defense of godly values. Even here, I have, as much as is possible, been objective, and have endeavored to make allusions to how rappers have continued to portray women in their rap music videos; some of which are not complimentary to women's causes. Surprisingly, eight of ten times, there were women behind the scenes telling video models to wear very little clothing because doing so connotes and depicts sexiness. This pattern of distorted image portrayal became the vogue and became even more noticeable when rap artists such as Lil' Kim, Trina, and Foxy Brown came to the rap game wearing next to nothing in their video portrayals while calling their nakedness "girl power." Monica Lynch, head of Tommy Boy Records, sees things this way:

I'm not a young black male. I try not to judge that.... I would just say there's a real insecurity about their own masculinity, and they, the scapegoat gays, women or anyone else that they see as being weaker.
(Lynch 1999)

Supposedly, gangsta rap bothered society so much because of the mirror put to its face. Society was forced to take a fresh look at the dilemma of its own sexism and racism. Hip-hop displays male reality so vividly that society could no longer pretend that these discriminating distortions did not exist in these shameful formats with emphasis only on the maleness of society. Society has for so long buried its face in the sand like the cowardly ostrich is. Gangsta rap could not be any more gangsta than the society that produced it. The role that hip-hop played in this aspect of gangsta rap is yet to be

determined. Many gangsta rappers modeled themselves after popular Hollywood movie stars such as “Scarface,” “The Mob Story,” and “The Godfather.” Other rappers went for black superhero, pimp and hoe characters in novels written by Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim. Gangsta rappers exalt the love of money, of having many bitches and hoes, or they speak about life on the streets. In some of these artists’ works, one can infer or hear outright talk of racism, violence in the inner city, poverty, or police brutality.

In the 1990s, the hip-hop community lost three of its biggest and most influential rappers. These losses began with the death of Eazy-E (Eric Wright) in 1994, died from an AIDS attack. In 1996, Tupac Shakur was killed by gunshot wounds. And in the following year, Notorious B.I.G. was also gunned down. Many critics of hip-hop considered their deaths the result of the lifestyle they led. Ice T, a gangsta rapper said to have initiated the East Coast versus the West Coast rivalry that eventually killed Tupac and Biggie, had to release a song titled “Cop Killa” to commemorate the frequent deadly attacks suffered by leaders of the hip-hop district. Once the media got their hands on this song, it spawned an outcry from groups such as the Parents Music Resource Center, the White House, the Los Angeles Police Department, and C. Dolores Tucker of the National Political Congress of Black Women. These concerned groups declared war on gangsta rap artists and their misogynistic and violent stance in videos portrayals and spoken words. Publicity about the protests by the abovementioned groups landed movie roles and high album sales for Ice T. The rewards given to rappers for their bad behavior led many black nationalists’ organizations such as Malcolm X Grassroots, Temple of Hip-hop, NWACP, and

Allhiphop to question Hollywood's intentions, even though Ice T's record company dropped him after his next album.

The music industry is most likely not behind all the exploitation of women in hip-hop, but controversy is not new to the tradition of black entertainers in the United States. The rappers' struggle to gain the rights of free speech for their art form mirrors the manhunt and culture envying tradition of hounding of jazz, blues, and rhythm and blues musicians that took place before the hip-hop artists arrived on the scene. Some jazz musicians who were known to be heavy drug users and alcoholics eventually overcame the racism and the stereotype labeling in our time. The same warped attention was given to the near-naked outfits of P-Funk and George Clinton in the 1970s. Bootsy Collins with his weird ways also went through a struggle in order to break down barriers for subsequent artists, especially black artists. The blues, now considered to be as American as apple pie, was once called the devil's music. Chinua Achebe could have been speaking to the hip-hop community in 1971 when he wrote "Beware, Soul Brother," in which he warned that:

Our ancestors, soul brother, were wiser than is often made out. Remember they gave ala, great goddess of their earth, and sovereignty too over their arts for they understood too well those hard-headed men of departed dance where a man's foot must return whatever beauties it may weave in air, where it must return for safety and renewal of strength. (Achebe 1971, 29)

Achebe understood that the struggle of Africans, whether the Diaspora in the United States, or on the African continent, was one and the same struggle. The Diaspora African struggle has been one of returning to heritage, therefore the power to return lays in the ability to trace the link and then strengthen the grip:

Protect this patrimony to which you must return when the song is finished and the dancers disperse; remember also your children for they in their will want a place for their feet when they come of age and the dance of the future is born to them. (Achebe 1971, 30)

The hip-hop community needs a foot in the door of African classical tradition that Achebe described. He understood that a time will come when the children of the father would need to reclaim their proper place in this world, especially our “One Africa” heritage tradition. Even gangsta rappers have something valuable to say about the hardships Diaspora Africans encounter in the United States.

Hip-Hop and Rap as Social Political Tools

It is important to look into hip-hop’s artistic forms and contents. The forms include songs and videos, while the contents deal with experience, existence, and the reality of disenfranchisement and the brutality suffered by youths and minority sections within the United States. No true study of hip-hop or rap music can be complete without a consideration of the social, political and racial factors that are entrenched within the foundations of the polity and speech community that created hip-hop. Hence, the hip-hop artists bring with them experiences from their African-American community to a wider audience; to the universal audience. These considerations cannot be ignored when writing about the history of this movement. A study should take into account how deeply rooted the music is in the political implications of ethnicity. Hip-hop is a social, political, racial and economic force. All the same, hip-hop lacks the strength to be a powerhouse. One

cannot fully show the hip-hop movement as a completely evolved movement without taking into account the implications of race alongside the individual successes that many hip-hop artists have enjoyed. In essence, in terms of monetary rewards, but which is not accompanied by the social psychological dimensions of political emancipation rewards for the ethnic nationality and race out of which the hip-hop political economy draws.

Until hip-hop is able to measure its success not only in terms of individual success, but also as a collective powerhouse, hip-hop will continue to be viewed by many observers as being just another musical expression in suspended performance animation when its ethnic nationalism and hence its political economy is badly disenfranchised politically and socially. Frantz Fanon, the psychologist, wrote about this worry, “The native rebuilds his and her perception, and renews both the purpose and the dynamics of the craftsmanship...” (1968).

All those interviewed for this study stated that liberation must occur as the end result of all artistic expression. Hip-hop culture is a musical genre that has connections to African creativity. From the very beginning of the African people’s history in the Diaspora, music has been a form of connection providing an innovative, metaphorical, and inventive way to documenting, shaping and indicating both moody and happy experiences. As this role of shaping, documenting and promoting continues, hip-hop has been dovetailed in such a way that it is now adding its peculiar flavor to soothe the conflicts of its generation, the Generation X, which writer Farai Chideya saw as “the product of that one-out-of-two divorce rate” (Chideya 1995). Generation X responds to hip-hop and its messages positively with a keenness of comprehension and appreciation.

To some degree, we're images of our parents' physical, behavioral, and speech patterns. We're also elements of our environment as we are elements of our peer groups' influence. While at the same time, we are entities of the communities in which we are socialized. When history is examined this way, we are able to understand that hip-hop is a direct descendant of bebop. The style and method of bebop is the ancestor of hip-hop in terms of instruments, verses, word usage and impressions, both rude and vulgar. Hip-hop, as the most recent in a long line of African musical traditions in America, allows us to see who we are, what we were, and what we can or should become. Therefore, since legend has it that hip-hop began with black children using their parents' jazz albums in an attempt to imitate the musicians they heard, it makes sense that the past naturally transformed and translated into becoming reflections of the present. The Kuhn's Paradigm stated that with fortune and revelation, key people are authorized to receive ingenuity and inventiveness for their pioneering radical creations. In this case, hip-hop pioneers received this ingenuity for the purpose of modern day reinvention of their African musical lineage extensions.

Early in hip-hop's history, rent parties existed that were used to pay one's rent and also became a way for young players to buy sneakers. The word "sneakers" is not literal, but it represents any number of self-help activities of those who must augment the efforts of hardworking parents in defraying the enormous costs of child rearing. It is an act of supplementing costs of basic needs that coexisted alongside the style of speech performance, which too is a hip-hop effort to lighten serious burdens of hard life; it was sustained and transliterated into the 1980s. Throwing parties was a form of emergency

fundraising to solve pressing financial problems like paying rent, so that one did not become homeless. Keen listening to the lyrics of hip-hop music can illuminate much about hip-hop's social, financial, and political message obligations.

Old School, New School, Same School

The style of survival known to the older generations as “rent party” in the 1990s became known as “house party.” Rap and hip-hop are understood by the artists as two different things. For instance, what we see everyday on BET/MTV is what the hip-hop community calls mainstream rap. Rap and gangsta rap is what gets aired on television and other broadcast media such as radio stations. On the other hand, hip-hop is a part of the African experience in the United States, an experience in which much of the white audience is not interested, or can rarely comprehend. Yet, it follows the path of community cooperatives in African village life, where all hands were on deck to build a house for a village member and as such lessened costs, and puts a roof over the member's household, who could not have afforded to build a hut. Hip-hop is what the mainstream does not get to see, mainly for lack of interest in black life, or that they don't want to see the harsh truth. Hip-hop is as deep as the Underground Railroad, and it is not astonishing that a section of hip-hop is known as the underground.

If critics would begin to separate these two musical genres, hip-hop and rap they would be able to see the potentials of the hip-hop genre fully. Gangsta rap was created to provocatively entertain white folks. What society sees everyday is not hip-hop but rap

music. Viewing audiences often use these terms interchangeably. Although hip-hop is blunt, clear and honest, even though the honesty is not tasteful or pretty. While this generation is trying to tell their truth, we are told that these youths are not fit to be historians or griots because they glorify violence and are on a quest for monetary gain for personal profit, but they are also out for social profit. This is the impression people have about rap music, but underground hip-hop artists such as Sound Provider, Common, Black Star, Dead Prez and KRS-One are all critical of those rap artists who make it difficult for the real message of hip-hop to be perceived, received, and consumed by the people for bettering the community. But KRS-1 proffered a solution to the impediment that is constituted by rap artistry's money yell:

Thus it is time to bring back the days of rap scholar [ship]. Here, it is meant, going back to the time when your rhythms were of rap; and not for the almighty dollars. I have been in this from the beginning. So slide to side." (KRS-One 1998)

KRS-1 called these rappers' mentality "niggative." Malcolm X often labeled it the "slave mentality." KRS-One would go on to add, "See! They even call themselves niggers. The nigger mentality is it that's really the ghetto mentality" (1999). There are those adepts in the hip-hop movement who are also critical of the stance their brothers and sisters have chosen to take. That they are ignored while the violence and bling is belittled and disregarded by society is the greatest frustration of the hip-hop movement. The White Anglo-Saxon male-dominated society often urges the African-American community to fight against the Diaspora youths' message of violence and misogyny. The community at large not only listens to these so-called critics' condescending words, they

believe that the African-American community cannot competently develop its youths toward the discerning taste for influence, honorable good words, and valuable civic life inside hip-hop music circles. They think they have to arrogate to themselves the obligation to urge the African-American community to know and do the right socializing and rearing of the hip-hop youths. Yet, such is too presumptuous. By such posturing, white people have tried to suggest dysfunction in communications between generations of African-America and that the elders in the community forever need someone to step in. KRS-1 does not have the audience that 50 Cent has.

In Their Own Music

In his song, “Keep Your Headz Up,” the late Tupac Shakur, son of former Black Panther, Afeni Shakur, dealt with the political, social, cultural and psychological abuse matters that black women undergo in videos and in the real world. Of course, sometimes these ladies, also known as video whores, or hoes, appeared in many of Tupac’s videos. Tupac Shakur also wrote one of hip-hop’s most celebrated songs on this theme, “Dear Mama” in honor of his mother and other struggling black women,

Keep your headz up/when he tells you that you are not good enough-don’t believe him. If no one else cares I care. What I hate is to see brothers making babies and leaving young mothers to be poppas. The same women we came from/got games for/our names from/I wonder why we rape our women/take from our women/do we hate our women/I think its time to die for our women/heal our women/love our women/be real to our women/if not we will have a race of babies/who hate the ladies. (Shakur 1994)

The same society that criticizes black males for not being man enough is the same society that labels them as being “too macho,” “lazy,” and “sissy,” while at the same time as being, “overly sexual toward women.” Hip-hop artists are public intellectuals, as such, they create and sustain high quality public discourse, addressing urgent public problems in compositions, which enlighten, energize, and goad fellow citizens to take reproof and correct actions (Gate and West).

Mos Def of the hip-hop group Black Star did say it in an interview that, hip-hop is at a crossroads now; that some are trying to make money; while it is granted that men and women must feed their families, but that the extent of its prize is the crucial question? (B. Amatokuwu 1998)

The answer that the majority of the Diaspora Africans in the Americas’ black communities often expect of hip-hoppers is, “If a good name is worth more than silver and gold, then why the overarching yells of money, money, and violence, violence, all the way?”

For one African-American leader of today, the Reverend Al Sharpton, the solution is calling for a 90-day ban on radio and television airplay for any performer who uses violence to settle scores or hype albums. “There must be a way to step in and regulate what’s happening on the airwaves concerning violence” (Sharpton, “The Daily News,” NYC, 2006).

“The airwaves are being used to romanticize urban violence.” When asked by New York Post staff writers to broker peace among rappers. Sharpton told the writers, “You can not deal with this on an artist-by-artist basis. I’m not going to become a

mediator between artists. This is a recurring problem.” And for Saul Williams, a recording hip-hop artist and poet, the way of the smoke was described as,

It was the first time I had ever heard the word, "misogyny." And as Ms. Cleavage would walk into the classroom fuming over the women she would pass on campus, blasting those Snoop lyrics from their cars and jeeps, we, her students, would be privy to many freestyle rants and raves on the dangers of nodding our heads to a music that could serve as our own demise. Her words coupled with the words of the young women I found myself interacting with forever changed how I listened to hip-hop and quite frankly ruined what would have been a number of good songs for me. I had now been burdened with a level of awareness that made it impossible for me to enjoy what the growing masses were ushering into the mainstream. I was now becoming what many hip-hop heads would call "a Backpacker", a person who chooses to associate themselves with the more "conscious" or politically astute artists of the hip-hop community. ("Letter to Oprah Winfrey," April 2007)

Geneva Smitherman states that hip-hop is simply adding to the African tradition of music before it came on the scene, that it “seeks to connect with past verbal, thus oral traditions, and that it is extending the semantic space of black lingo.” (Smitherman 1994) Many hip-hop practitioners and critics are either oblivious to the messages encoded in emcee lyrics, or have never really listened to enough hip-hop rhymes. In Expressive Language, cultural critic, Amir Baraka reasoned that, “...in order for critics to fully know a culture and critique it fairly, critics should familiarize themselves with the words and word users of that culture” (Baraka 1987).

Thus far the above [golden rule over competent value and text examination and determination] has not applied in the case of the hip-hop and rap movements’ criticism because critics of hip-hop are often not a part of the hip-hop movement, nor can they be considered as hip-hop culture users. And we know such to be the understandings owed to

the notice that rarely can a critic succeed in meeting the golden rule intention from the periphery of a engagement or an indulgence. Hasty, not well informed, criticisms of hip-hop and rap have been confused that arise from a lack of competent knowledge of the metaphorical stance of much of hip-hop and rap musical expression.

What the hasty, ambitious critics have failed to understand about the hip-hop and rap movements' culture is that the use of metaphor to express not only hardship commentaries and denunciations, but to express the joy that is an innate inheritance from hip-hop forebears like soul, the spirituals, rhythm and blues, jazz, reggae, rumba, calypso, continental African hi-life, and the others that remain politically and socio-economically preoccupied with living and livelihood lyrics relating to affairs of broken promises in family networking, marriage contracts, community relations with police and governance agencies, and misrules of failed governments and failed social programs. Much like the case of other musical expressions, a critic cannot simply one day decide to be a critic of hip-hop because a critic needs to be able to properly contextualize the historical force behind a given hip-hop creation.

The act and the art of getting meaningfully involved with hip-hop music and its movement's practices would, first and foremost, require one to be either a part of the hip-hop community by being born into it, or by becoming a patron who is willing to embark on concerted self-education about African musical expressions in the United States' black community. Then one would spend years in hip-hop education and immersion in order to see the roots of validation of the music and be able to comprehend its content criteria and its folklore. For only then could the one succeed in becoming a vibrant and viable hip-

hop critic of note. For without this type of committed self-education much of what passes for informed criticism of hip-hop expresses no more than incompetent antagonism of a value structure, which to this researcher's mind is one and the same as a tendency to confuse the rap for the hip-hop, and that the error of misjudgment may never remit in the uninvited criticism. In other words, the mutilation of the hip-hop and rap genres could continue to give off suppositions of a racially and class motivated campaign of calumny preferred by blind reactions toward the genres, or by a slow learning disorder.

Most critics are not able to see hip-hop as a genre of the Diaspora African in the United States' black community. When an emcee or rapper, is boasting about killing someone in his or her music, the emcee does not mean it literally; he or she is really speaking about killing the person with his or her lyrics, implying in elaborated language form that he or she is reaching the inner-man or inner-woman within the audience, which conclusion is of course drawn and deducted from the elaborate sentimental, body language and singing bee expressions of listeners. In deed and in truth based on this researcher's competent knowledge, this form of boasting is often a part of the African story telling style of sentence emphasis. However, an uneducated critic is often unaware of this deep structure. Boasting has been a part of African folklore since coming to America. Hip-hop, as a purposeful black message format, attempts to erase the space between its already conceptualized self, its delivery forms, its content criteria, and its audiences' perceptions of the critical relationships between demand and supply.

The preponderance of metaphor in designating the unexplored ways of life's valuing is a way of knowing that emerges from this interaction of reality and use of the

language, [if the unfriendly critic would not mind the concept of measured use of implied value and achievement exaggeration in any form of boasting] of indirection to draw attention focusing to a subject matter. In the song “Black Girl Lost,” hip-hop artist, Nas Jones wrote:

A young girl, beautiful love child/you like them thug style, link rocking,
mind copping/hit on the sink, a hundred drink popping/...you was
innocent, but now you rent a dick wear the tightest shit./Channel looking
real, airbrush nails/hit the gym, hit the scale/heaven sent but negligent to
see a prophesy... niggers hurt you but you just let them/hurt you and leave
you. What is up ma/fronting like you naïve? (Jones 1996)

In this song, Nas portrays the satirical nature of this sort of talk, and the desire it portrays. The talk is lucid, yet, lewd thus brutal and vulgar, and the desire portrayed is a beautiful management of ironic humor concerning how black relationships run its vicious circle, and how accepted it goes of necessity, and of in-group self-acceptance; of how it all factors out, yea, of hate still courting love as seen in the sexual encounter the above musical composition saying and stating that sex as love goes on with its bonding, especially in the music/movie industry’s eye of blackness life and living.

But the ironic condition of how approval and disapproval accommodate each other in the enacting of sexual love could very well have its universal flavor beyond our often unkind attempts to look at the harshness of black love affairs as an abnormal black psychology that frequently assigns and consigns brutishness and rape to black sexual interests as in the Nas Jones constructed lyrics above. On the other hand, there is the beauty of the Nas Jones poetic portrayal in that he has delivered it in the context of a metaphor that permeates black expressions of an analogy, of an allegory. Still he is clear

in what he is describing; he is relating a life of contradictions, of a variety of the United States. White Anglo-Saxon D.H. Lawrence has talked about the locations where God has placed the repulsive and the sweetness veins and outlets of our physiological expressions of defecations and sexual desirability's intercourse. Nas Jones talks about politics of hate against the hurt that black men issue to the black women, and the equally social political obligations of meeting personal needs for sexual love, and he did so successfully without the inclination to judge. One has to be clear-headed to be able to decode the specific impact meant to be delivered in that musical composition's lyrics. For instance, the image of the police as "pigs" was used in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s to depict disapproved functionalism whenever the founder of the Black Panthers Party, Huey P. Newton, verbalized the struggle African-Americans were waging with corrupt policemen, which he saw as "the equivalent of the animal of the mud," the pig. Using this word invoked the contrast between the goodness of the police as the peoples' defender and protector in contrast to the ill-treatment the corrupt police have used against the African-American community, and other disregarded peoples and communities that have arrived and followed the Black Panthers Party's corrupt police as the same as the animal "pig" nomenclature such as the women liberation movement, the Latinos, the Chicanos, the gays and lesbians, the American-Indians, the grape pickers farm alliances and so forth.

The Black Panthers Party's claim of a switch from friend to enemy was in this sense of use of allegory, quite apt, giving that it is the way of the pig to disappoint and create more problems for its landlord without regard of its owner's investment in its upkeep, that favored proper discharge of his or her law enforcement duties and

obligations. The pig is known as a dirty animal that has no regard for what it eats or how it lives, the United States' police are seen in the eyes of revolutionary Black Panthers as being kin-folk of the pigs when it comes to how the police treat black folks, and other disregarded and disrespected ethnic, cultural and gender nationalities of the United States. The hip-hop movement signifies "that bittersweet momentum when young black men captured the ears of America and defined themselves on their own terms" (Morgan 1999). The query for hip-hoppers is more than that, because it has roots upon which to fall back, regardless of whether it is borrowing from the old school records, or it is using its ADS Link formula as the cushion or horn of inspiration. It is still a branch of the African-centered musical expression that has a classical heritage toward which it reflectively rests its pride and its joyful social political articulations, and its economic and financial values multiplied inside the United States capitalist culture's Diaspora political economy.

CHAPTER 4

OBSERVABLE THEMES OF HIP-HOP MUSIC

Interview Ideas and Themes

Chapter 4 is concerned with summarizing the crucial ideas and themes addressed in the personal interviews with the artists. It is organized thematically as bondage impairment, expression of social values, and expression of cultural values.

Bondage impairment is the idea that African people are in bondage. It addresses how individuals need and want enough power to break away from their bondage situation.

The expression of social values means that the behavior of an individual is derived from, and is in consonance with, environmental socialization influences which are important in determining how the artist is shaped to deal with the social topics of his and her art works.

And lastly, the concept of expression of cultural values relates to the role of the individual's culture in shaping what the person learns and how it influences the individual's learning process and work ethic.

Hamersley and Atkinson (1993) identified key phases in data handling as generating concepts and developing typologies. The goal is to group the text into parts and units of data utility prior to assembling data into themes. Following the steps of this axiom, this researcher has proceeded to interview artists in various settings and locations, the texts were later transcribed into oral tradition grains of processed data showing the interconnectivities between interviewer and interviewees. The aim of this procedure was to pursue hi-fidelity levels of data confirmation by listening to and hearing the background information about the topics that the artists considered vital to their individually unique upbringing, their involvement and experiences with the hip-hop art, and how the questions asked were answered relative to events and incidents that formed specific compositions and productions.

These research design strictures are composite requirements this research has considered to be helpful in pursuit of the whole story surrounding the person, the art, and the movement. Such essential knowledge is one of the advantages of the ethnographic data base and ethnographic data collection. There must be a union of the message source, the artist, the art in terms of the message source (understanding the interconnectivity), and the movement in terms of what the collective as a cultural phenomenon is set out to achieve and project as cultural wares. While transcribing the data, the researcher discovered she has accumulated eighty-eight hours of interviews and cellular phone conversations. The original intention was to transcribe everything of their input for the purpose of explaining the happenstance of the observable themes. During transcription,

the researcher began to find connections between the most important themes brought up by, and emerging solely from, the artists conversational descriptors.

Three major themes were isolated as determining factors in the matter of the artists' purpose behind their vocalizations and oratory. These themes are as follows:

- (1) Bondage impairment; the idea that African people are in bondage. How does the individual gather power to break the vicious chain fastening and consolidating the bondage? Under bondage impairment, there is impairment of the physical body, the mind, and the spirit. There are many political prisoners whose depositions indicate that there is the need for liberation of African people from the impairing bondage of white supremacy. The second major theme discussed extensively and recurrently in the interviews is:
- (2) The expression of social values means that the behavior of the individual is derived from the environment of both primary and secondary socialization in terms of family, community, extended role models, social institutions and their agencies and servicing agents. The third is:
- (3) The whole complex expression of a secondarily acquired cultural value competes overwhelmingly to dog efforts toward making the ADS Links active and spontaneous as such reflexive and reflective response patterns of behavior. This relates to the role of the individual's culture in shaping the individual's learning and adapting process, which consequently determines what the person learns and frequently emits on a day to day, event by event, basis. It was discovered in the interviews how many of the artists have on

more than one occasion gone to the African cultural “gumbo” to pull out the linguistic implements with which to find, create and found the art, and in the case of hip-hop, repertoire replenishing, reinforcing and refining.

Hip-hop is a setting in which to construct and reconstruct the body, mind and spirit of the black community. As public agents, the music of the hip-hop artists seeks to:

- (1) Reflect prominent issues targeted for specific audiences,
- (2) Use of appropriate vocabulary that is recognizable to the public at large, or not,
- (3) Use of lyrics to regulate how words are used and understood, and
- (4) The capacity to stir the crowd to action musically to such a frenzy that creates desired attitude and behavior changes toward being and becoming a good citizen through hip-hop persuasion strategies.

In an interview with Black Star’s Talib Kweli, he stated how he was able to pursue and achieve the four abovementioned behavior and attitude management mechanisms. He said of hip-hop/rap, “...we’re building black minds with intelligence, and when you freestyle, then keep the subject matter relevant. Every emcee grabs a pen and writes some conscious lyrics to tell the children” (2001). For instance, in his new solo album, Talib said, “You ain’t a thug! The real thugs are the government.” Hip-hop seeks to take its place along with other African creative expressions. It struggles against those who seek to discredit the power behind the hip-hop movement. The goal is to reclaim and reconnect to the roots of freedom in which hip-hop was created and nurtured.

Lightly Treated Raw Data of Conversations with Artists

Twenty-five artists were interviewed. These were ten females and fifteen males of Diaspora African-American descent. Their ages range from seventeen to thirty-four years. We used the criterion of spontaneity of words used in their videos for selecting an artist to be interviewed; their words drew us to select them for this data gathering. The artists were met at functions at different locations where the researcher participated or observed a performance. The artists were either performing themselves, or they were co-participating with another artist(s) for a concert or function. Most of the twenty-five artists in this pool were drawn from the East Coast, particularly Philadelphia, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland.

Most of the interviews were conducted while the artists were on location, and only a few were done over the telephone; and always at the convenience of the interviewees. The interviews were conducted at settings that were comfortable for the participants, e.g., in their homes, on school premises, with one that was held while the interviewer and the artists were driving back from a function. No artist that was approached declined to be interviewed, and every artist was met with at least twice prior to granting the interview. The first interview was the longest, 59 minutes; the remainders were of 35 minutes or less duration. All the interviews were taped and later transcribed. In each case, the interview started by the researcher stating her identity and indicating the nature and purpose of the research, and the fact that there would be a need for a follow-up interview.

Shabazz

Shabazz is a 34 year old social service worker by day and an artist by night. Her mission is one of extracting and positively influencing the idea that African people on the Continent and within the Diaspora are in one form of bondage or another, and only differ in the depth of environmental structures. Her assessment:

Bondage Impairment:

SHABAZZ: I think my work is rooted in my desire for African people to be liberated where they are. And so, that's the basis and focus of all my artistic work. There may be other issues intertwined with this commitment, but it's about liberating the people. And, as it relates to hip-hop, I think that, many of the artists today are speaking to the freedom of African people. Some of them talk in particular about political prisoners in the fact that they're locked down, so there's the need for these people to be freed. It might be in the formats of individual cases like that of Geronimo Pratt, or of Mumia, or of other things outside of being a physically, prison walls' confined African people.

However, there are political prisoners in the United States who each is serving more than 20 years of jail terms.

BNA: What! What would be that definition of liberation of black people?

SHABAZZ: I think that the demand is for total liberation such that the required liberation of the black people is not only a physical side to it, 'cause we are now physically not free. Hence, it's not only the requirement of becoming

physically freed, but also the task of freeing of the mind, the spirit, and thus, the physical body. I think that global white supremacy is the thing that's controlling all of us in the Diaspora and on the Continent. Though some of us refer to ourselves as conscious people, and that is if we recognize ourselves as conscious persons, then our liberation is just at the individual liberation level. Hence the notion that we're free, or that we know who we are as African persons, rooted in our culture; such is not enough.

Yea! It is important that you know about your cosmology. You know about your spirit systems, you know about all these different things, but you're not taking this vital information and relating it to the masses of us... dialoging with the masses of us about this vital information is thus our obligation in the hip-hop community to articulate time and again, from one album to the other. Or else, we're lip serving and lip servicing. And... cause the masses of us are not free! It does not then matter if I'm conscious and you're conscious of the mass of us. Okay, if you take music for an example, any genre of music in which Africans are involved, we can talk especially, about hip-hop.

The masses of us are not in tune with the quote, unquote, four fingers are in the air, two on each hand bending, which at the same time must necessarily be accompanied by consciously guiding music. Or the music rooted in African culture of talk, of the spoken word. The masses of us are not

in tune to the original and the originating source of our successful and excellent livelihood inside the hardship and tribulations of life in the America.

The masses of us are more attracted to music that demonizes us as a people. “We thugs,” “we bitches,” “we whores,” all of these things can be attributed to the fact that our people are controlled by global white supremacy! We do not feel good about ourselves. We do not know ourselves. And, some of us know who we are and choose to do that kind of music that demonizes us as a people; as there are some of us who are controlled by the power of money once flashed in our face like a corn flashed in the face of a chicken!

Expression of Social Values:

BNA: The behaviors of the individual are derived from, and have a lot to do with, the environment of both primary and secondary socialization. Is this true for you?

SHABAZZ: It’s about selling an album, you know. It’s about how many units they sold! It’s about that kind of thing. These “conscious” people know all of these things, they know of the fact that we have been at war and have been attacked at every level, but that cannot do a simple thing like come to an event, a conference and be active.

BNA: With regards to whom do you mean we’ve been at war?

SHABAZZ: You know it’s a simple answer, it’s with white supremacy! Hence most young kids looking from outside are looking at these hip-hop cats like,

'he's got mad cash! Big fancy cars! Big rocks!' And these are the things that are popularized as gains of being on the gig as a hip-hop artist. I think it's important to develop a network of people such as the artists, the activists, the scholars and such other important models of good example for these are the people who are truly committed to the liberation of African people and deal with the misplaced values.

The above array of models must include those people being actively engaged with the liberation struggle wherever we are. Then we follow to expand the network to everywhere on the Continent and in the Diaspora, so it is not just in Philadelphia, Chicago, or London, or Paris, or Ottawa. Again, making liberation of African people popular! I mean, there's a whole lot of thing we should make popular in this direction of improving our worldview beyond the confines of the plaguing white supremacy. After all, we have a way of making things popular!

I know that Patti LaBelle made Donna Karan popular back in the days before all these other people. We knew a lot about Patti LaBelle. We made Tommy Hilfiger popular, yet it is not that misguidedly I respect any of these people or buy from them, because I know that we're at war! This point relates to the role of the individual's culture in shaping what the person learns, accepts, rejects, and/or internalizes as well as allows it's influencing of his and her learning behavior.

We have internalized these things that white supremacy says such as that our hair does not look good! That our music is not worthy! That our films are not worth! That our actors, musicians, writers, scholars, et cetera are not original, and I can point to “awards” that our people fall down at once they receive a Grammy. On and on along this dishonoring that we suffer in the hands of that white supremacy is the resulted sick need to be validated by whites. Okay, I have pointed out problems.

Now I am going to give some solutions. We should have some viable “Ten Plans” for dealing with our art. And that’s inclusive of film, writers, poets, musicians, and the whole notion of art. This is important because African people’s art should be functional. Not to remain something we hang up and listen to only. It’s supposed to be dealing with life. Therefore, we need to present not only problems but solutions as well and such is what I focus my work of art to do and evidently accomplish.

Talib Kweli

(Talib Kweli is a 25 year old hip-hop recording artist.)

Bondage Impairment:

BNA: You talked about balance. As an example, in the 1960s when there was balance of the formula of division of labor between the thrusts of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior’s liberation efforts. Why is it the case that

hip-hop does not have this balance, which I imagine, gives the struggle a balance in the statistics about friends and foes?

TALIBK: We do not have that balance because you need context. In the 1960s, you see in the news the lynching of our people in the South upon the premise of one flimsy excuse or the other. And then also, have we heard of our people being sprayed with flood weighted volume of water hoses; of black people being beat by dogs and stuff like that: You still notice that people were not allowed to vote. When stuff is that blatant, it creates a consciousness in people that says the word: "I need a change."

But when it becomes institutionalized and creates only illusions of, we're here and are making it in the very bad situation. For example, the illusionary observation that in the changing circumstances, black millionaires are emerging on the Atlanta, Georgia horizon? There are black people on Television, on WB, black politicians in New York City, what do we understand that we need any more to fight for?

People think there is nothing any longer to fight for. Meanwhile, we're getting all these things while our communities are getting worst, and worst in every material and even, in every spiritual sense. So, it's 'the illusion that we've made it', that is keeping the people in shackles. It's keeping leaders out of touch with being able to capture people's attention due to the separation between what the leaders see themselves as representing versus what the people are seeing and noticing to be happening to our communities,

deteriorating into a severer decline and distress; amid the illusion of having been in the arrival side of the threshold of the American dream.

The issue is that we still have the obligation to feed the people's needs, that people would feel that they do not need anything more. However, giving the condition of things, the people fell as if you need and you're not getting it, that then, you are not going to get it. That's the colossal depression right there.

Expression of Cultural Values:

TALIBK. I think hip-hop can be a tool for liberating us. However, it's unfair to take someone from a poor community or somebody who never had access to stance information and be like, 'you have to be revolutionary. You have to free people through music.' I mean that things do no longer make any sense. So, I think hip-hop can help. All the same, we have to acknowledge and respect the contents of where it's at right now. And give props to that, to what these people have created. What businesses have created such as jobs and the matter of how people are eating off of that regardless of whether you like the messages of the songs or not.

BNA: What do you know about Kemet (ancient Egypt) and the connection to hip-hop?

TALIBK: I just know that it's the same thing, as talking about hieroglyphic writing on the wall just like graffiti was when people are affected by their music. Hip-hop is inherently African in its form, its structures, and how it

makes you feel and everything. It's the same thing, yea, as the concept of deep impression that shapes the mind in one way or toward the other.

BNA: Do you think hip-hop needs to go back to some, if you will its general African roots because a lot of times, you see the negative aspects of sexism, like material things convey? Do you think that's affected because we're disconnected from our African roots?

TALIBK: No, I think it's very African already. What we're doing and how we're vocalizing the musical acts is according to its African roots' injunctions see that its Africanized in its words utility, in its instrumentation, in its phraseology, and in its hip-hop's pop culture referencing has Africanized its everything. And as I said I deal in African spirit processes as if I am broadcasting in the media: not a balance of many people who deal with that type of stuff.

Hence, I make sure that I always do my acts that way. But I think that way; I'm not the type of dud who fails to see that we should go back to living like that. I am practical in the way I think. Just like because in Africa we used to walk around bare foot and have certain cloths that were made for the weather. He opined that all things said and done, it would be foolish to come to New York City or to Philadelphia dressed like we dressed in environmental continental Africa, which weather conditions are essentially different from those of New York City and or Philadelphia. He said that we have to build from where we find ourselves right now. He said that, "We can acknowledge

our heritage and history because that gives us a foundation to stand on and build upon. But that is what it is, a foundation. It's not that it's something new."

BNA: Why is it that it's easy to talk about Africa but they cannot make the physical connection or move, because every one talks about going to Japan, and about going everywhere else, but rarely about going to Africa? Why travel to Tokyo, Japan, and not about going to Nairobi, Kenya, or going to Accra, Ghana, which travels establishment and mainstream white supremacists make on official and vacation map-outs? Is it not a serious mind-bending, and body unifying gaps? Won't the whites some day laugh at us about that disinterest in self-actualization on a matter-of-fact basis; yea! beyond whims and caprices?

TALIBK: You got to create, you cannot hold people responsible, and it has to be a reason to want to go. It has to be ambition. Why should someone go where there is no reason? I mean really, if you're looking at it on a business way and I am somebody who, and I mean... I am going to Africa. I am going to Africa in two months and I hope I get to go again. But why should somebody who is an artist go to Africa? Why? Under... you look, on a Western materialistic measurement rule, why? You know what I'm saying, why? When you look at images of Africa, you have to understand that is where people are, that is why.

BNA: Okay, I am saying in terms of actually going as opposed to mere saying attitudinally what behaviorally would not be implemented? Okay, I am talking

about groups that talk about going back to the essence, implying as it is, the act of really going back to Africa through musical tours to support and help one social cause or the other non-profitably; and getting that experience, that influence.

In this, we're at the same time asking whether it is always auspicious to wait for our pimp to send us to Africa before we feel the innate urge to recognize the essentials of this essence of spiritual pilgrimage to our ADS Link. This question is pertinent considering that they are not going to materially and financially commit themselves to helping you to get to that your Africa for you to then get wiser about your total self identity? This query is especially critical when it concerns record companies...?

TALIBK: I don't know, I cannot say that the issue of disinterest in going to Africa is true. I know a few people and groups, consciousness groups and all that have traveled to Africa... and got pretty wiser and a few who became disgruntled afterwards.

BNA: No, what I am talking about is more in terms of the hip-hop community consciousness raising political essentials. White artists that hail from Europe, China, Israel, and even Latin Countries make trips to their original sources it has always enhanced their influence command in the cultural market places of New York and Hollywood; that's the kind of thing I am calling attention to, rating enhancement and prestige suggestions that even includes positive law

enforcement and U.S. State Department reactions to them afterwards as an internationally ethnic-culture visible personalities?

I know you know what I mean? The Jews go to Israel for spiritual rejuvenation and linkage powers and for ceaseless spiritual and political connectivity. Why not hip-hop consciousness raising community embarking on such diplomatic, political and even ethnic-culture self enhancing sojourns to Africa for spiritual re-loading of values of their trade, their musical expressions' trade? Must everything conduce to personal, pecuniary profit? Where goes a consideration for in-group's social-political profits?

TALIBK: That is what I am talking about. I know Dead Prez just came back from Africa, you know what I mean. I know Lauryn Hill of the Fugees, and them went to Africa like you have to have resources. Going to Africa entails a lot of costs and diplomatic paper work; you have to fight through a lot that you don't experience when going to Tokyo, Japan, and or to London, in the United Kingdom. You can go to Europe all day, but going to Africa, you have to convince people to go through it.

If people have the consciousness to do that, not artists; artists are busy making music. They're not playing tricks and doing this and that. If someone comes to them and says, hey you! We have a change, a doe for you to go to Africa; you'll find that ninety per cent of the artists would be willing to go. But the organizers as a people are not doing that "cuz" the money ain't there.

Expression of Social Values:

TALIBK: We live in a society, in America where people do not know anything outside of these boundaries. So, why should they... I learned myself because I had two parents who were educators, who ensured that I was in school and on weekends I was doing things, and I knew I loved reading, and I was doing things like traveling. I was blessed. Not everybody is blessed like I am. Most of us ain't as blessed as I have been. So, it's like we have to build with people from where they are and not where we think they should be.

BNA: Do you think people are ready to come on board the hip-hop train where TalibK is the engine driver? Or would it better be that they would rather come on board such a hip-hop train where it is Shabazz or Lauryn Hill or Bahamadia that's the engine driver?

TALIBK: Heavens yea! People are ready to accept certain things and that's where we should hit them at, which is why they'd rather come on board the train that has TalibK as their engine driver. People are ready to accept that black people should have their own. And that's where you have to hit them now. And if they're ready to accept that, you cannot have your own until we are all unified, then hit them like that.

I think you assume that responsibility once you pick up a microphone. Whether or not you recognize it, I cannot judge somebody for not recognizing it because they may not know what they're supposed to be doing. Hence, it's for them to learn. But yea, I personally think that the responsibility comes

when, huh... as soon as you're in any position where somebody is looking up to you. Whether you have a little brother, you're a teacher of whatever you do.

Bahamadia

(Bahamadia is a thirty-something year old hip-hop artist and mother.)

Bondage Impairment:

BNA: She has premised her understanding of bondage impairment upon the idea of trial and error of "Kollega" (1996).

BAHAMADIA: I did not have that much of creative control over the whole process. I mean, I write all of my materials, but I did not have creative control in terms of overseeing and gearing, at directions toward which I really I wanted a role to go. And currently, I have a handle on, say, 80 per cent of creative control over the direction and creative process. I have new management now; you know what I mean? And a new label as well that is supportive of my efforts; you also know what I mean? These gains are right there, positive and nourishing for me.

BNA: Do you think you're a part of the movement that is going on right now with the likes of Kweli, and the others in that concept that call themselves, "The Roots People," a new consciousness movement?

BAHAMADIA: No, and I do not necessarily want to be a part of that concept because I am about individuality. So, I am promoting individualism. I guess if that is a word, ha! I am it.

BNA: So, all the new consciousness movement means to you is a, ha! Ha!?

BAHAMADIA: I am saying it like that just to make the point that I just do not want to be pigeonholed. I do not want to be labeled and put in a box, don't like being put in an ideology machine. It's too confining and too restraining to be put in a box, and I don't want to be confined or restrained. I want to be free to use all the avenues that are out there for me. This is because God allowed me that ability to utilize, and I want to utilize those talents and freedom of movement fully. And no disrespect is meant by me toward those brethren out there doing their thing. That's their niche to carve such that if that's what they're comfortable operating, that's cool with me.

I don't want to limit myself to just doing a song with Erykah Badu. I want to be able to do one with a Ja Rule, or with Dragnpics, or Jay-Z, or Erykah and Common, you know what I mean, or with Madonna. Or with anybody as long it's a spiritual process, where we can get in there and get the money, get the song made and the end result is to get the money and move up the units. That is my bottom line, you know what I mean. I got to be real with people, you know what I mean.

Expression of Cultural Values:

BAHAMADIA: Yea, so, in some instance it could be a situation where at some point if you're not educated in some verse of life, like that sister that feels she has to dress the way of the "trash class" to gain attention from men and something like that. And at some point, she might want to change her life. But it's up to that individual to seek out that help, and research that information. I think that's one of the things I dislike most about the industry or society, period; is that society tends to use people in high positions like the artists, politicians, and different people like that as scapegoats. They like to try to hold us accountable for someone else's actions or mistakes. And I cannot relate to it because I have a whole lot of issues about which I have myself to deal with.

I don't feel that I am in a position to direct someone else's life. I can only offer you what was offered me, but it's up to you to consider receiving it or not. Some individuals may not be in the frame of mind where they'd feel they'd want what I have to offer or need to or should receive what I am able to offer them. Hence, it's kind of a Catch-22 situation. I know you know what I mean by all this explanation. Not much people who like to be bothered with learning from others certain ideals of living. It's a thin line, so you got to walk, between being a so-called example, or source of inspiration, or real good support for someone else. Honestly, I try to avoid being a judgmental

person, or a sermon preacher in such regard as offering to be anybody's role model.

My sister, a lot of heads don't simply wanna hear all of that!

Especially the young ones of this generation don't allow it for you to sit there and point your fingers because everybody got something in their closet. You know what I mean. On my part, I see that I have to clean the ones in my closet out. Ha! Ha!! Ha!!!

BNA: All is well, yet you're involved in the new project with South Africa and AIDS pandemic? Would you want to tell us something about it?

BAHAMADIA: Right! Actually it's a tour that has been put together by Ms.

Fiona Blums and Peter Lo. I'm sorry I am not pronouncing his name right. I am not sure how it's pronounced. However, what they have done is put together some artists to go to South Africa for seventeen days of tour as planned to spread information about the epidemic of AIDS, so they can get the information to protect themselves over there. We're doing concerts and the money realized would be donated to AIDS research.

BNA: In all of Africa?

BAHAMADIA: Right.

BNA: Or it is particularly a fundraising for AIDS treatments and research for South Africa only?

BAHAMADIA: Right.

BNA: Okay, are they only going to stay in South Africa? In other words, do they plan on going to other towns and cities in other nations of Africa?

BAHAMADIA: I think they have plans to extend it but right now the focus point is South Africa.

BNA: Which....

BAHAMADIA: Excuse me; I don't know much about it. I know it is something I have the pleasure of partaking in seeing it succeed. I just believe in the cause.

BNA: Oh! That's wonderful. I'm happy you're growing into it and this is a part of the commitment to something worthy about Africa that I referred to in another interview. It's all about getting involved and discovering more of life and your universe of belongingness. After all, I remember it was in 1998 that you hosted a political prison show at the 'Fake House'?

BAHAMADIA: Yea! The effort was an attempt to honor Mumia.

BNA: Yea! Alright, what's your connection with that prison community now? Are you still helping and supporting that cause?

BAHAMADIA: Again, these people seek me out. I don't...

BNA: Sister! This question concerns your energy utilization levels. Sometimes people see things in us that we do not notice of ourselves. In your case, it's of liberator energy, an abundance of it that they see in your music. Do they see you correctly, or they're mistaking about your uses of energy, which bulk pool of strength is into liberation work?

BAHAMADIA: As long as it's positive, it's cool with me. I really do not look at myself as this extraordinary mouthpiece for single black mothers and all this stuff. You know what I mean. This political crusade chick! Eh, eh, not it. My background has a lot to do with my interests. I think they would be surprised if they take a look at who I am, and they'd see that first of all I came from a really dysfunctional family. Much of it is that you're determined to break out of the bind on to some worthy causes. I see that you know what I mean. I was a juvenile delinquent as I was growing up.

My life is very much different from the clean-up job through which I've been portrayed in the industry; the industry's been doing a fine image clean up job. I, too, am in it with them. I am not shying away from the responsibility, but I am saying, I am one of those people who try to represent the truth as best I can. The only way for me to do that is to deal with me completely, to confess my past. That's why I am talking about my past a little bit, to just give people some type of idea that they too can climb out of the gloom and its hopelessness if they make up their minds to rise above the squalor and its mean tendencies.

BNA: Keeping it real, right?

BAHAMADIA: Right, exactly.

Expression of Social Values:

BAHAMADIA: A lot of artists ain't educated, or know about the business side of their involvement with hip-hop affairs. And education and knowing the business side are about the way you represent yourself, and being in a position of sane mind to decide how much you want to compromise. If you don't know how to negotiate, you're no doubt wearing someone else's clothing, and you become a walking billboard for some company and different designers and stuff like that.

If you start seeing that you need to have some sort of proposal put together and talk with your team and management or have your attorney draw up contracts, then you're on the right path to accomplishing goals. Too many of us artists act before we think, like giving up free promotion. We're still not looking at what we do as a business. Then it's about treating people fairly, because a lot of time, it should be that you reap what you sow. I have noticed that we mistreat our peeps. By we; I mean I and the group were talking about our way to meet you about some people who are influential misusing their peeps. For example, this new group I am working with; I am the one with the name out now, a track record right now. I know they have a sort of element necessarily about them that I don't use in my writing scale, and in my recording abilities.

You know what I am saying. I give a pair of hooks and don't take the name and credit. Or, I don't just throw them a couple of dollars and not treat

them fairly. So, it's about giving each person a chance and a fair opportunity to become elevated as well. You reap what you sow. I can't call it and name names or point fingers, but I am just saying such could be a good instance of the fairness question too. You know what I mean. You get what you give.

BNA: Okay! Thank you for this elaboration. Do you think that an artist has some responsibility to his and her primary community, vis-à-vis the black community, and to its consumers? This knowledge is important in respect of, let's say, of an artist like you who deals a lot with the community needs and all. Do you think you have some responsibility to your consumers when you're putting out any kind of project?

BAHAMADIA: I feel like I have a responsibility, first and foremost, to myself. I have a responsibility to God, in particular that it's really His blessings that loco mote me. I am just operating under His favor and flavor. I'm just a vessel for the Lord to move about, enlightening and encouraging mankind through our soothing music. I believe that you know what I mean. I am a Christian. I feel like I got to acknowledge Him in everything and all things that I do, or I could run out of steam. You know what I mean.

So, once I fulfill my obligations to God, the next is to myself because if I am not taking good care of myself. Then I cannot do a good job of properly being able to utilize me for anybody else. Yea! That is, if I am not taking proper care of myself. It's a team effort because everybody in my immediate surroundings, or the people I gain the most inspiration from. You

know, I cannot necessarily give support to all the people, all the time. Such is not humanly possible or the one fags out.

So you know it's a give and take situation and then that's part of the essential upbringing routine too; to be conscious about these sorts of things and seeing how it's going to affect others. Of course, such is a personal thing with me.

Jamal a.k.a. Last Emperor

(Last Emperor is a twenty-something year old hip-hop artist from Philadelphia.)

Expression of Social Values:

LAST EMPEROR: Okay, I guess being... as I suspect a lot of the good hip-hop artists in general, people who seem to excel in whatever it is they do... for a large part of my childhood an introvert. And... you know, so it was about reading in some part and getting a deeper meaning of life as opposed to external things. Of course, once I got older, I have wanted to explore the world and seeing what there is. I was just fortunate enough to have a childhood that afforded me the opening to get deeper and deeper into an extensive reading habit.

BNA: What types of reading do you indulge in? What types of books?

LAST EMPEROR: Basically, anything from simple things like Sesame Street to National Geographic, you name it. A lot of times, I have indulged in watching

television, but as structurally as possible, I would most times be watching PBS. Broadly speaking, I tend to like reading any material that's halfway educational. If you can say it, those were basically what I did. I try to take some of those early experiences and implement them lyrically.

I'm twenty-something and kind of removed from a lot of things I did as a child. I still try to keep them fresh in my mind. Knowing the understanding people have of us, hip-hop is a music that holds on the youths of our culture. I still go back and forth, reading things that were required for me to read at age 12 and getting the deeper meanings of the youthful world. I just try to put that in music and hope that people listening could pick up what I'm trying to say.

Expression of Cultural Values:

BNA: I was listening to you talk about griot-ship and connecting things back to Africa. It looks like a lot of people don't want to take it back to Africa. How were you able to do that, such as giving credit to the people before you?

LAST EMPEROR: Indeed, well, I was fortunate enough to have elders who really directed me to the direction that made me end up in this position. So, now it's an obligation to remember the charity of that inspiration. The problem today is that young cats don't vibe with their elders, you know, and acknowledge things that came before them.

On a lighter note, I grew up listening to things my parents were listening to, which maybe... Gill Scott Heron, Last Poets, or Sun Ra... or the list goes on to poets, writers, you name it. Hence, it's like musicians as well. Hence also, if you don't know where you've been, you're not gonna know where you're going!

I mean it this way, that, if I don't study and acknowledge the African griots, if I don't study and acknowledge all the elders that were before me, and as you said it right, the elders might not have called it hip-hop, but we're doing it. It's not different. I think that young cats doing it should know the history behind it. For instance, I remember that back in those days, I would be standing on the street corner drinking beer that we would pour some on the ground for the hominess that were not here any more! Africa consciousness elders have called it the libation pouring.

So, as I grow older and found out about libation, I am like damn! That's deep, hence even in our ignorance; we were still keeping some portions of our tradition alive. And nowadays, I've gone back and asking cats about such things and they're like, "I don't know, such and such did it, so we're doing it."

BNA: Well, that was refreshing. Or else, in my school of thought, what you've been relating to and performing is called, 'epic memory.'

LAST EMPEROR: I like that. I like that word. So, if they can acknowledge that teaching about the DNA, a lot of Freudian theorists would trace ailments and

disorders in that fashion, like, indicating the reasons this or that person is acting this way, and they'll be dramatic about their assertions....” They always look at it in a negative way, yet we know there are some good things about it sometimes.

Yea! We know it exists. Yea! The connections are there, indelible, not erased by time, distance, or brutal changes we've been going through. People continuity is real, made and ordained by Almighty God and sustained by culture in the daily and routine celebrations of life.

Bondage Impairment:

BNA: How do you feel about emcees who are not saying anything while they spin the records? For example, the Roots crew, hip-hop artists who are based in Philadelphia have said, “You ain't saying anything new” you know, big Willie... type of whatever! You know what I mean?

LAST EMPEROR: Right! It's part of this disease that's the nature of capitalism. They know that the entire world studies black culture, from fashion to music; everything we do makes the world go round. They know that if kids in Austria are gonna look at a Jay-Z, a commercialized rap artist's video and see what he is wearing, they're gonna want to wear it, too!

It's important that we get into his ears and detect what we want him, a lot of times to be talking about. We don't have our eyes on the prizes. It's often not for us, because it will mean they've approved and recognized us as

mainstream entrants. This is in terms of hip-hop and I really believe a Renaissance to be going on right now. So, maybe heavy thinkers like we were saying, the Roots and KRS-1 have for the most part been doing it all along. Also, Common, Black Star and everybody is coming with it. The force is so powerful. I mean we might not get notoriety; we may not be on BET, Black Entertainment Television, and every five minutes. Yet, what we've noticed is that to be commercial in the hip-hop culture means that the one has gone mainstream or has crossed over to the white listeners. Or the one is on MTV every five minutes, but they know that we're here, providing the balance.

Kali

(Kali is a 21-year old male student at Temple University, Philadelphia.)

Bondage Impairment:

KALI: I notice that a lot of times people say, Oh, I know this. Or, you God! Or you this and you that. You know what I'm saying? But quite often, the claim is all vague. They don't give them nothing like... something they could just do, right now and right then and there. It's going to have evaluating principle, a rate of power. I'm all about the spiritual power. Like... I just want my whole life to be how I want to live.

The life first and let that is a reflection of what I do in music. I see a lot of people say a lot of good things in music, but then I know for a fact their

life from day to day does not reflect it. When such individuals whose lives do not reflect what they claim as their symbolisms in music, I do not see them to be that way even when they're talking about divine stuff and all that. Sometimes very few artists lead the life they argue in their music.

I can't really understand it because I can count on my finger tips people who on one hand could live up to what they speak about. That's where everything hinges because you know it's more real to lead the life that one sermonizes in his and her music. I want to give people the plan, and a whole system to implement it. And boom! Because you know, when you talk, let that feel like it is you're offering the logical side, and hiding the contradiction side.

Or whatever, yet, I want to give people something and suddenly it comes out like a macho talk. For real, the more you listen to it, the more they feel the power in it. Not just that it feels good that moment, but that they see real changes that they can add to their lives' resources.

BNA: Have you seen this phenomenon in any of the artists you can name? Yea!

Have you seen this tendency in any of the artists of note?

KALI: No, not like I envision it; this is more like a warning shot. We should not encourage contradictions having to sip into the mindset of hip-hop artists.

BNA: Why not give us an example, especially that you're making a lot of sense.

Can you paint a picture how you would want it to be understood when we're witnessing contradiction-in-terms rearing its head in the language and behavior structures of artists in the hip-hop district?

KALI: Okay, I would like to do it in a couple of years because that's the way I really want to develop as an artist. I want the artist to be so vain lyrically on grounds that a lot of time, I see artists who are lyrically really conscious, but style wise, they fall down a little, lyrically. A lot of time, individuals are really stylish, yet, no spiritual and consciousness contents to them. I want it to be high; to be high on both the spiritual and the consciousness contents.

I want to make a whole album where it's just like in the first song; it all would deal with different parts of the spirit. Just each part would touch a different part of you, the by the end of the album, you just have an elation.

Expression of Cultural Values:

KALI: I remember this one song, because the kemetic was just about things all the way, talking about the 'Tree of Life' I know. There, I said what I like about living by the rules of the Tree of Life and it made a lot of difference in the world.

BNA: What is the Tree of Life?

KALI: The Tree of Life is a whole spiritual map that I frequently draw in my head that has a musical note sounding vibrantly in my soul whenever I am in its contemplation. You know what I am saying! Just like from the first to the tenth note. This is the case whereby the tenth note is the lowest key that's much like one's physical senses. You just constantly are working your way up to the first. You know what people would call the Coptic Church being the

first church known to humanity. For me this idea of the Tree of Life was before the first church from where the whole Coptic's came.

BNA: All the same, let's go back to spirituality., It seems like we live in a Western World where spirituality is associated with religion, still, we hear you going farther into the genuinely African Coptic's remote sensing. Can you expand on that? Is that what you're talking about when you talked of the Tree of Life? Is this another definition of "spirituality," otherwise of, say our general, all purpose view of "religion" as faith and all that we make of it?

KALI: Right, all is well in seeing that if I do say religion, then I am inviting us to go much more down an unready available lane of consciousness into that Africa that started the First Civilization, and conceivably, the First Religion. The only way that I see people making any kind of change socially and spiritually on to the whole question of essences is by going back and connecting to the First Civilization thus to that First Religion of Ancient Africa, where nature's law and statutes have readily checked and checkmated the greed, the brigandine, and the arrogance of nurture in the vain mankind that nowadays, we've all become.

So, my spirituality in a sense is kemetic, Egyptian, and it would be a religious practice, but it is an African religious practice, not religion in the sense of how we train in Western World; it is definitely an African world origination; you can't mistake it for those of anywhere else.

BNA: You said something relating to people that you listen to, who are this people? Would it be people that you know, people you've listened to, and some are individuals you've really, really listened to more than you've listened to others? These must be the people you said you listen to in appreciation of their beats? So, take at least, three groups and tell us who they are? Group them for us in terms of beats, or, in terms of flow content?

Expression of Social Values:

KALI: Well, first of all, people that I listen to, I do so for the contents, if these are well mixed. This is because sometimes people have a mix-up between themselves socially and politically. Of course, I listen to artists like KRS-1 for his contents and everything else in his compositions. I think, I just grew up on him. He was like the first artist I really got into in grade school. I really got into his messages but there really isn't someone else. This is conceivably because of my understanding in different areas of his musical interest.

I'm like saying that people got to know what I know. Now, it is hard for me to submerge myself as I did when I was a kid, but now I practice a certain way that was unfamiliar to me before this time that I'm growing up; it's not a contradiction, instead, it seems an elaboration of a previously narrow pathway. I know certain things. I know it's hard for an artist to submerge himself and herself [*sic*] as when I got taken by KRS-1 mainly for his contents as well.

Oh, besides the issue of contents; I also listen to people for their flow. Yea, for their style, and for trying to improvise, to do certain things like has Nas, the son of bebop and a black arts movement artist. I like Nas for his flow and everything, yet the thing I like most about him is that he's getting so much attention. If you've noticed it, you'd see that on his latest album, he tried to do things unusual; much like a good mixing of consciousness, which is the newest thing on the horizon.

I mean if you are gonna give it the right way, do not just do anything for trying to do it. It's not natural. I'm not saying that every hip-hop artist or an album that's released must have a political message. However, if you're somewhat aware, do not try to cover it up. Then, I also listen to people for their high energy levels, which abundance of it show and tell from well defined lyrical thrust as could innocently arouse supportive not, needless controversy. Like ODB's types of energy; I'm feeling good for his amounts of energy.

BNA: Is he not on crack, too?

KALI: Oh, but that's what I'm talking about when earlier I said that people are talking about something, but their life never reflects it. All the same, I'm talking about energy levels, and how he applies these.

BNA: That's how the whole Wu-Tang nation is, like, they will say things, but they are tired, too. What's his name...? Bobby Digital talking about bitch this and bitch that... that your mother ain't shit! Blah! blah. Because that's another

thing I'm battling with in the case of Nas, because it's like compromising what you believe in. If you've come to a level of consciousness, you can't be saying what I can best explain with a Gill Scott quotation who's talking about how hip-hop nation has a responsibility.

He calls the "Message for the Messenger responsibility." I went to length to read the poem like Nas when he first came out with his first album and everyone was calling him a prophet. You can't want people to call you that, and keep doing what you're doing that compromise the integrity of yourself, your image and the recognition for your works of art.

KALI: I agree with you. I agree with that admonition wholeheartedly in a sense because people might know something but they can't really just do a whole album on it, especially if it is a "down the gutter level thing."

BNA: Hence, you think that the hip-hop nation or still the hip-hop sub-culture needs to continue to upgrade itself on the vectors of integrity of self, of self-image and of recognition that cannot be tarnished by contradictory behaviors. This is particularly important giving that on and of it, theirs is not yet a verified culture strand; it forever needs upgrading its ways of talk for both content, flow, and energy, right? For nobody knows whether on its own and of itself, hip-hop can survive.

The hip-hop movement can help its image and influence causes by speaking for good manners, self-comportment, and by giving qualitative liberating musical service to consumers? Like Gill Scott was talking, he can

really talk to some level because he's still on drugs himself. I think that's the picture you're trying to paint or whatever! Do you think it would ever get to that low level when compared to the state of hip-hop right now?

KALI: I mean it has to start artists who really want to rep the manners of speaking music to get better with awareness of the message for the messenger responsibility clause that's been proposed by Gil Scott. I know for a while I really started writing like a year ago, yet I have always been in hip-hop. I used to always freestyle, but I consciously did not want to write. Until I was sure I have developed to a certain level of consciousness. I don't think that some people have enough respect for their day to day life as I do respect mine.

Rajah

(Rajah is a seventeen-year old high school graduate.)

Bondage Impairment:

BNA: We've heard that some people hate you, who are these people, can you name them?

RAJAH: Blacks, whites, you name it. I said early that I wrote about boys and stuff, but that has changed. Now you look at me as seventeen-year old at a rally where I know that anything can happen. I know that those cops over there are watching us, waiting to lock us up, like they did Mumia. There is this particular song I wrote about Mumia and how they locked him up where no

one can touch him if you visit. Not even his family is allowed to touch him! That's crazy and unfair. White people don't treat their animals like that, so why do they keep doing it to us?

Mumia Abu Jamal is a political prisoner convicted for killing an officer in Philadelphia about eighteen years ago. Today at the rally, the MOVE Organization founded by the late John Africa organized the event to celebrate Mumia's birthday.

BNA: You said white people locked him up. Then you look around and all you see are white faces supporting him. Why is that the case?

RAJAH: Sister, is that enough to keep him alive? One thing that they, white people need to do is educate their family members and community about human rights. I think black people need to know how to better organize themselves. This is important because if you know how to do that, man! Can you believe what we can do?

Yea! We will be free. We wouldn't hate ourselves like we do. Do you know that some people can't stand me because I'm "young" and going away to college? Instead of them to be happy for me and for us, they prefer to hate me. These are the types of things that I write about, the need to crush this oppressive system... of self hate.

Expression of Cultural Values:

RAJAH. First and foremost, my work is for my people. I would say my African people because that's who we are, when we accept ourselves. We can empower other people through what we do. The focus of hip-hop is supposed to be to educate and enlighten the people: to liberate them to doing good things for the self due to the notice that at times doing good things for the self means doing the right things for the people.

My work is to make them aware that they could be in Mumia's shoes, and to reflect and imagine that when in such his pinching shoes, they would expect that somebody would stand up for them? People like you and I, that's who? Or they would expect us to stand up for them, essentially because they're black? So, the lesson in this is, when you do to people and think that it don't matter, your day will come! Fine, you know what they say, "What goes around comes around."

Expression of Social Values:

BNA: What do you say to other young people who might say that they are not concerned with what you are doing? Besides the above, what do you want your work to do for people?

RAJAH: It's this word that I hate to use, but it fits well here, it's called, "player hating." It simply means people that hate you for whatever it is that you are doing; and they're doing it both as a habit, a hobby and what else gains, yet it

all emanates out of negative envy. They hate you for trying to better yourself. They hate you for not believing the same things that they believe in; the vicious circle goes on and on.

Survey

Open Ended Questions:

- (1) What is the purpose of your work?
- (2) Do you see any link between hip-hop and jazz, blues, sorrow songs, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, bebop, or griot?
- (3) What is the difference between griot and hip-hop?
- (4) Do you think hip-hop and rap need to evolve?
- (5) Do you think hip-hop and rap need to evolve?
- (6) If so, why and how much further can this happen?

Questionnaire Questions:

- (1) How did you come about listening to hip-hop and rap music? (Circle one)

Had nothing to do

Radio/Television

Wanted to connect with my roots

Parents Records

Wanted to be cool

Friends

(2) Do you think hip-hop was discovered? (Circle one)

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

Undecided

(3) If so how, when and by whom?

(4) Who first introduced it to you? (Circle one)

Friends

Parents

Media

Undecided

(5) How do you gain access to listening to hip-hop and rap music? (Circle one)

Radio

Television

I bought it

I borrowed it

None of the above

Other: _____

(6) I view television channels that play videos as often as (Circle one)

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 times per week.

(7) I listen to radio stations that play hip-hop music as often as (Circle one)

4 5 6 7 8 9 10 times per month.

(8) Are you able to understand the language and styles of hip-hop and rap artists?

Yes No

(9) I listen to hip-hop for the (Circle one)

Beats

Lyrics

Message

Peer pressure

All of the above

Other: _____.

(10) Name your top five hip-hop and rap artists?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

You may wish to comment:

(11) Would you like to see it taught in schools? (Circle one)

Yes No

You may desire to comment:

(12) What do you think would become of hip-hop and rap in the next five to ten years time? (Circle one)

Totally accepted

Totally rejected

Neither here nor there

Still controversial and attracting negative publicity

Still controversial but attracting large scale following

A big business venture

(13) Name the artists you feel help to preserve hip-hop's immovability?

(14) Name the five artists you feel are simply in the movement for the money?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

In chapter 5, the intention is not to try to indulge in additional summary work on the conversations with the artists in context of findings. We I have felt it unnecessary. We've I have done so here, but only insofar as it is deemed necessary to throw anecdotal light on observations already treated in a satisfactory manner through the structures of the questions and follow-up questions to the artists. Thus to attempt to re-work the conversations would only limit the passion and seriousness of these spontaneous responses given on a freestyle basis by the artists interviewed.

The Purpose of the Data

The major tasks were to analyze whether the artists understand: (1) the functionality of their work, (2) the linkage of the music they participant participate in and the Africa/African Diaspora Musical Heritage, and (3) to examine the artist's overall means on the scale that appeared in the data.

First, Amatokwu conducted a histogram showing the count of the data points falling in various ranges. To carry out the histogram, our groups were plotted in the x axis and their frequencies on the y-axis. This displayed the general shape of the frequency distribution (Chi-square and Normal). Once the histogram was able to provide a graphical summary of the shape of the data distribution, only then was the boxplot applied to determine the median, the upper and lower quartiles and the minimum and maximum value of date. The boxplot contains the middle 50% of the data, the upper edge showed the 75th percentile, the lower level of the boxplot showed the 25th percentile and the line in the box is the median value of the data. The ends of the vertical line indicated the minimum or maximum value. Boxplot was useful in that the variable location and spread were visible. It provided the data's symmetry and skew-ness and displayed the outliers. The disadvantage was that it at times emphasized the tails of the distribution which were the slightest definite points. The answers to this questionnaire are based on the responses of the twenty-five participants.

Question 1. How did you come about listening to hip-hop/rap music?

- a. Had nothing to do/Radio/Television: 20% (5)
- b. Wanted to connect with my roots/Parents Records: 60% (15)
- c. Wanted to be cool: Friends 20% (5)

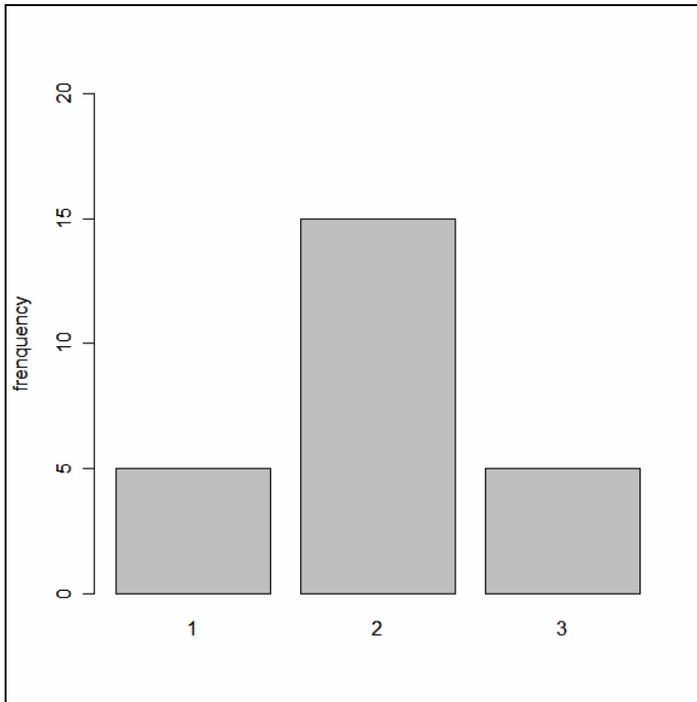


Figure 1: How did you come about listening to hip-hop/rap music?

Findings for Figure 1: Where X-axis is:

- 1. Had nothing to do/Radio/Television
- 2. Wanted to connect with my roots/ Parents Records
- 3. Wanted to be cool: Friends

Question 2. How does your work differ from the works of other artists?

- a. I have something to say: 51% (13)
- b. My beats are off the hook: 40% (10)
- c. Undecided: 9% (2)

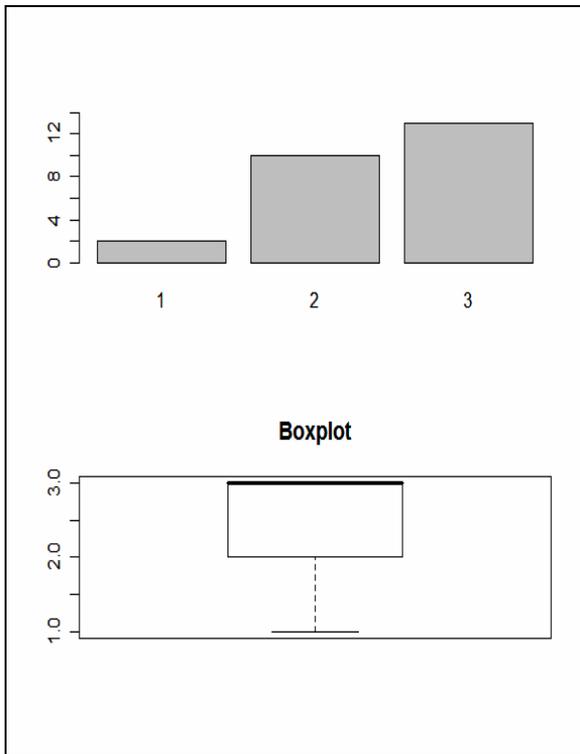


Figure 2: How does your work differ from the works of other artists?

Findings for Figure 2: Where X-axis of the first plot is:

- 1. Undecided (least strong)
- 2. My beats are off the hook
- 3. I have something to say (most strong)

Question 3. Do you think hip-hop was discovered?

- a. Agree: 25% (6)
- b. Disagree: 71% (18)
- c. Strongly Agree: 3% (1)
- d. Strongly Disagree: 1%
- e. Undecided

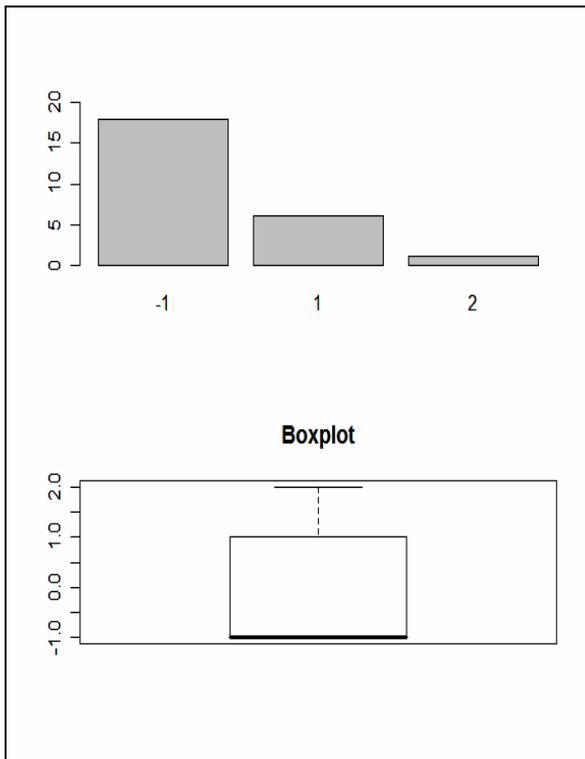


Figure 3: Do you think hip-hop was discovered?

Findings for Figure 3a: Where X-axis of the first plot shows:

- 2. Strongly Disagree
- 1. Disagree
- 0. Undecided
- 1. Agree
- 2. Strongly Agree

Findings for Figure 3b: In the boxplot:

- the bottom thick line is Q1 (the 25th percentile) and also the median in this case
- the top of box is Q3 (the 75th percentile)
- the top line above the box is called “upper fence”, which is $Q3+1.5*IQR$ (Interquartile, $Q3-Q1$)

Figure 3: $Mean=-1*.71+1*.25+2*.4=0.34$

Question 4. Who first introduced hip-hop to you?

- a. Friends: 40% (10)
- b. Parents: 20% (5)
- c. Media: 40% (10)
- d. Undecided

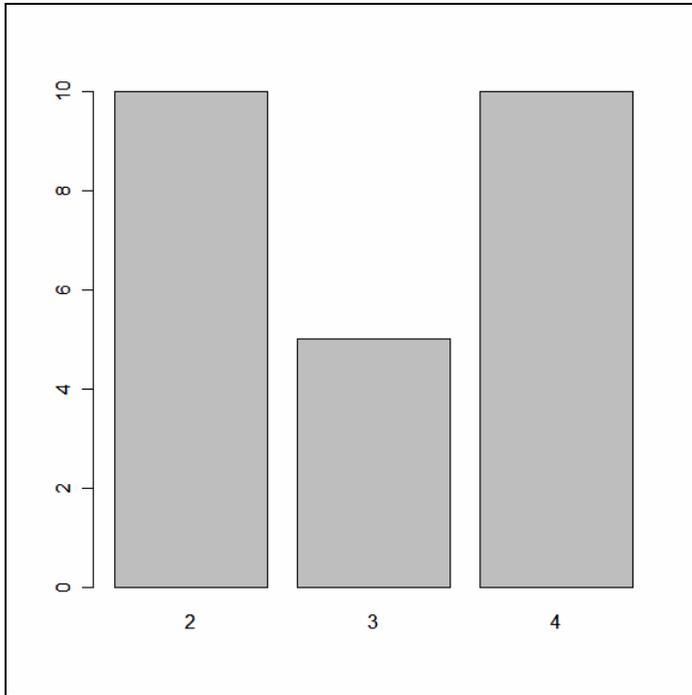


Figure 4: Who first introduced hip-hop to you?

Findings for Figure 4: Findings for Figure 4: Where X-axis is:

- 1. Undecided
- 2. Media
- 3. Parents
- 4. Friends

Question 5. How was Hip-Hop able to touch you musically?

- a. Message: 60% (15)
- b. Phat beats: 30% (8)
- c. Peer pressure: 10% (2)

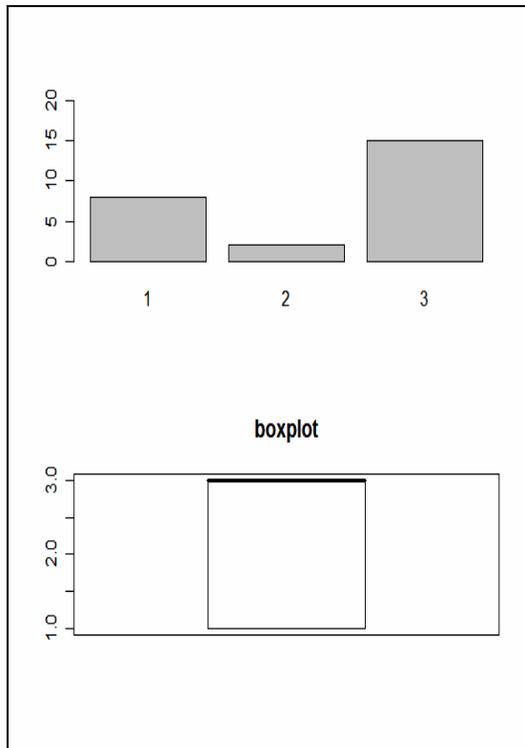


Figure 5. How was hip-hop able to touch you musically?

Findings for Figure 5a: Where X-axis of the first plot is:

1. Phat beat (least strong)
2. Peer pressure
3. Message (the most strong)

Findings for Figure 5b: In the boxplot:

- the bottom line of box is Q1 (the 25th percentile)
- the top line of box is the median and also Q3 (the 75th percentile) in this case

Figure 5: $\text{Mean} = 1 \cdot .3 + 2 \cdot .1 + 3 \cdot .6 = 2.3$

Question 6. How do you gain access to listening to hip-hop/rap music?

- a. Radio: 10% (2)
- b. Television: 20% (5)
- c. I bought it: 30% (8)
- d. I borrowed it: 38% (9)
- e. None of the above: 2% (1)
- f. Other

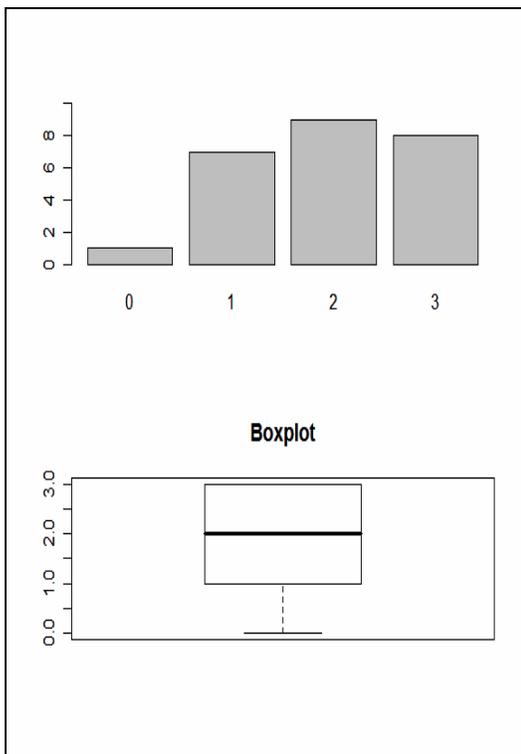


Figure 6. How do you gain access to listening to hip-hop/rap music?

Findings for Figure 6a: Where X-axis of the first plot is:

- 0. None of the above
- 1. Radio/Television
- 2. I borrowed it
- 3. I bought it

4. Other

Note for Figure 6a: higher numbers indicate more intensively into hip-hop

Findings for Figure 6b: In the boxplot:

- the bottom line is called the “lower fence”, which is $Q1 - 1.5 * IQR$
- the bottom of the box is $Q1$
- the middle thick line in the box is the median
- the top of the box is $Q3$

Figure 6: $Mean = 0 * .02 + 1 * .3 + 2 * .38 + 3 * .3 = 1.96$

Question 7. I view television channels that play hip-hop/rap videos as often as (times/week):

- a. 4: 30% (8)
- b. 5: 10% (2)
- c. 6: 50% (13)
- d. 7:
- e. 8:
- f. <9: 10% (2)

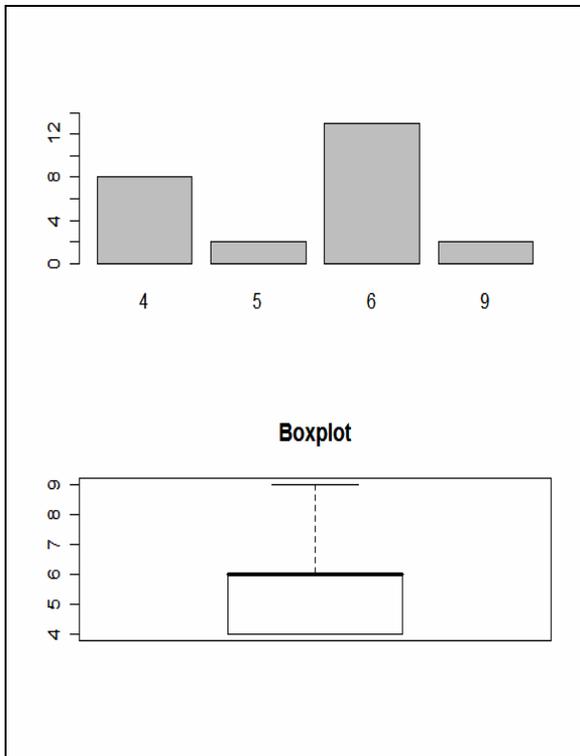


Figure 7. I view television channels that play hip-hop/rap videos as often as (times/week).

Findings for Figure 7a: Where X-axis of the first plot is:

- 4 times/week
- 5 times/week
- 6 times/week

7 times/week

8 times/week

9 times/week

Findings for Figure 7b: In the boxplot:

- the bottom of the box is Q1
- the top of the box is the median and Q3
- the top is the upper fence ($Q3+1.5*IQR$)

Figure 7: $Mean=4*.3+5*.1+6*.5+9*.1=5.6$

Question 8. I listen to radio stations that play hip-hop/rap music as often as (times/week):

- a. 4: 5% (1)
- b. 5:
- c. 6:
- d. 7: 40% (10)
- e. 8:
- f. <9: 55% (14)

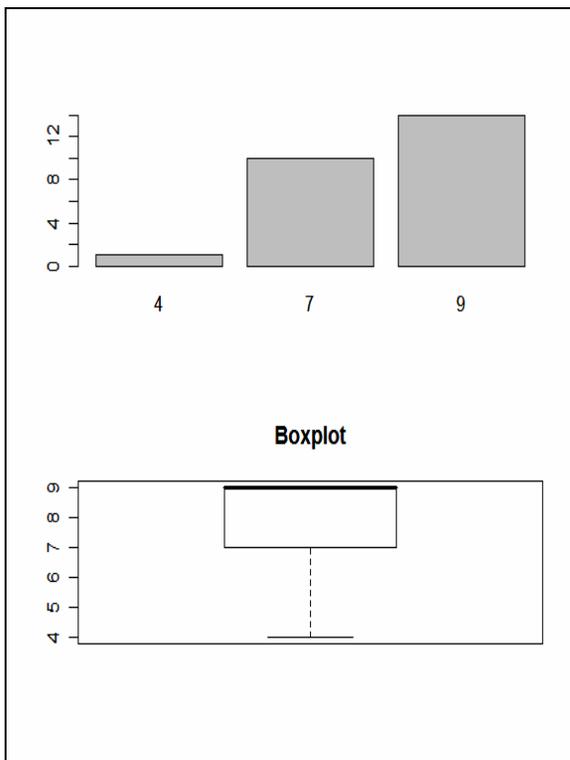


Figure 8. I listen to radio stations that play hip-hop/rap music as often as (times/week).

Findings for Figure 8a: Where X-axis of the first plot is

- 4 times/week
- 5 times/week
- 6 times/week
- 7 times/week

8 times/week

9 times/week

Findings for Figure 8b: In the boxplot, the bottom line is the lower fence ($Q1 - 1.5 * IQR$), the bottom of the box is $Q1$ and the top of the box is the median and $Q3$.

Figure 8: $Mean = 4 * .05 + 7 * .4 + 9 * .55 = 7.95$

Question 9. Are you able to understand the language and styles of hip-hop/rap artists?

a. Yes: 99% (24)

b. No: 1% (1)

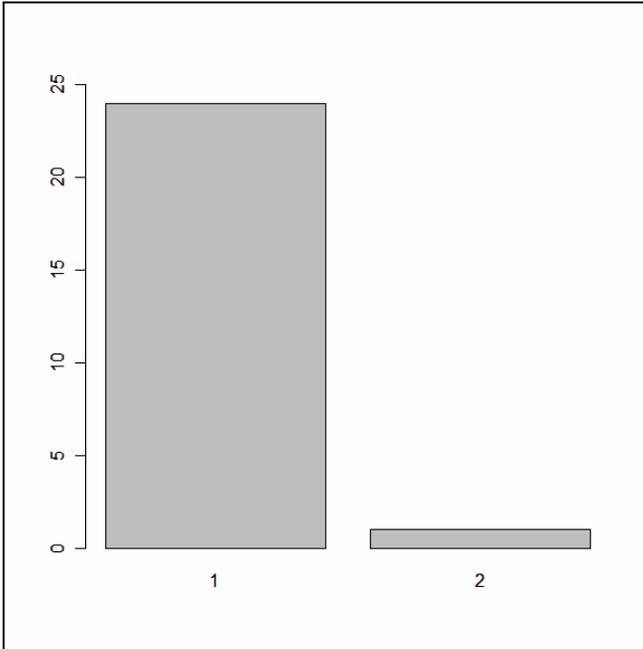


Figure 9. Are you able to understand the language and styles of hip-hop/rap artists?

Findings for Figure 9: Where X-axis is:

1. Yes
2. No

Question 10. I listen to hip-hop/rap music for the:

- a. Beats: 20% (5)
- b. Lyrics: 30% (8)
- c. Message: 49% (12)
- d. Peer pressure: 1%
- e. All of the above
- f. None of the above
- g. Other

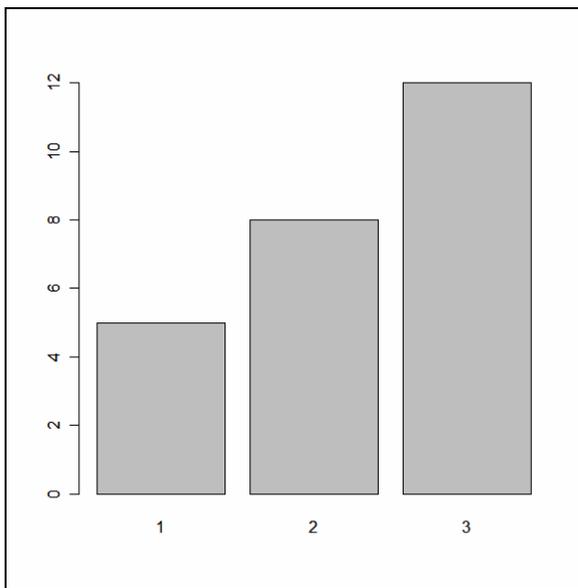


Figure 10. I listen to hip-hop/rap music for the:

Findings for Figure 10: Where X-axis is:

- 1. Beats
- 2. Lyrics
- 3. Message
- 4. Peer Pressure
- 5. All of the above
- 6. None of the above
- 7. Other

Question 11. Name your top hip-hop/rap artist?

- a. Rakim: 45% (11)
- b. KRS-One: 20% (5)
- c. Tupac/Biggie: 15% (4)
- d. Andre 3000: 5% (1)
- e. Lauryn Hill: 5% (1)
- f. Other: 10% (3)

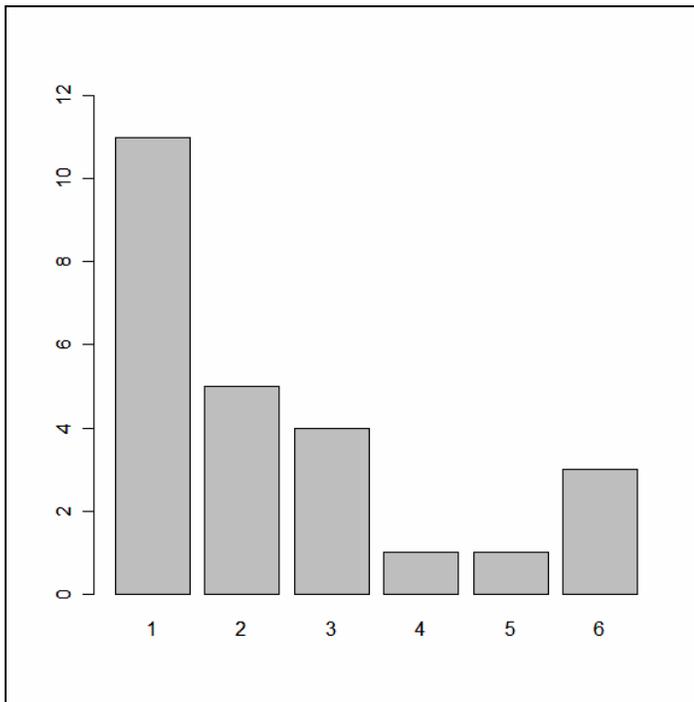


Figure 11. Name your top hip-hop/rap artist?

Findings for Figure 11: Where X-axis is:

- 1. Rakim
- 2. KRS-One
- 3. Tupac/Biggie
- 4. Andre 3000
- 5. Lauryn Hill
- 6. Other

Question 12. Would you like to see hip-hop taught in schools?

a. Yes: 99% (24)

b. No: 1% (1)

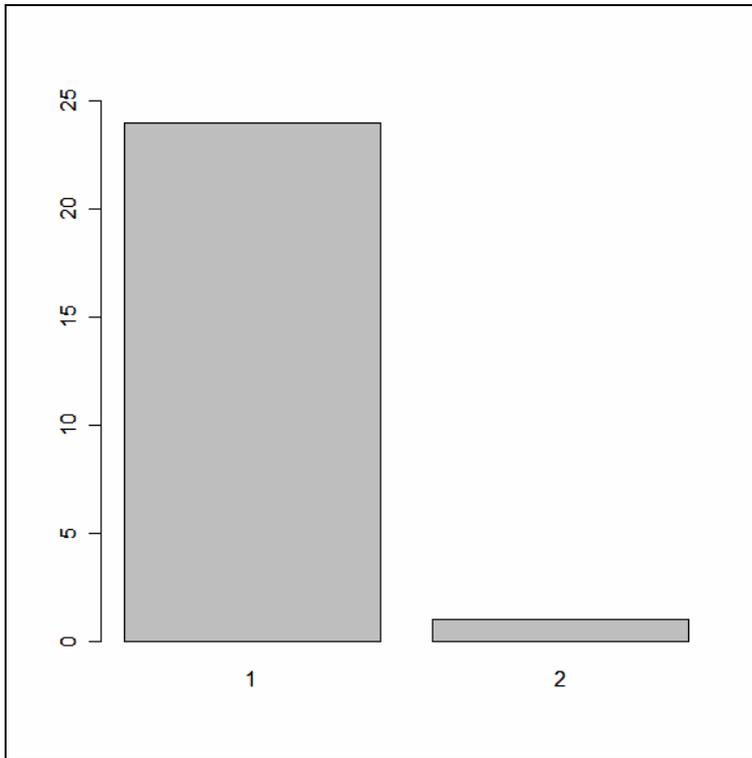


Figure 12. Would you like to see hip-hop taught in schools?

Findings for Figure 12: Where X-axis is:

1. Yes

2. No

Question 13. What do you think will become of hip-hop/rap in the next 5 to 10 years?

- a. Totally accepted: 50% (12)
- b. Totally rejected: 3% (1)
- c. Neither here nor there: 7% (2)
- d. Still controversial and attracting negative publicity
- e. Still controversial but attracting large scale following: 40% (10)
- f. A big business venture.

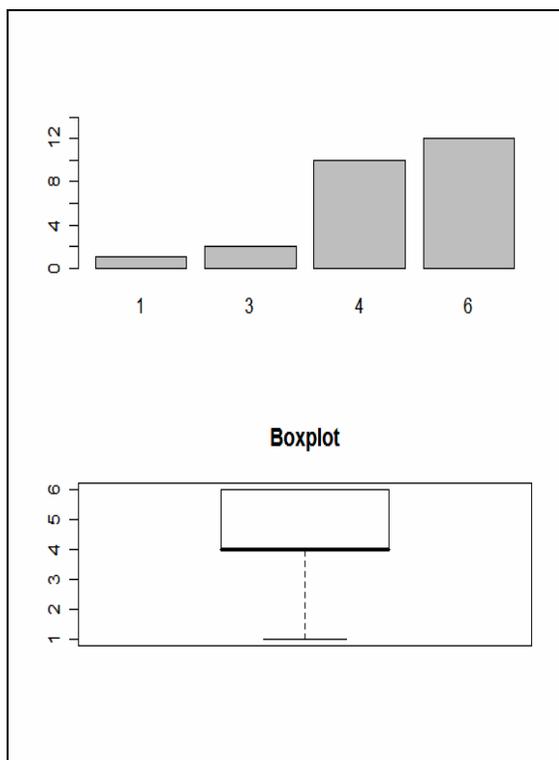


Figure 13. What do you think will become of hip-hop/rap in the next 5 to 10 years?

Findings for Figure 13a: Where X-axis of the first plot is:

- 1. Totally rejected
- 2. Still controversial and attracting negative publicity
- 3. Neither her nor there
- 4. Still controversial but attracting large scale following

5. A big business venture
6. Totally accepted

Findings for Figure 13b: In the box plot:

- the bottom is the lower fence
- the bottom of the box is Q1 and the median
- the top of the box is Q3

Figure 13: Mean= $1 \cdot .03 + 3 \cdot .07 + 4 \cdot .4 + 6 \cdot .5 = 7.7$

Question 14. Do you see any link between hip-hop and jazz, blues, sorrow songs, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, bebop, or griot?

a. Yes: 59% (15)

b. No: 41% (10)

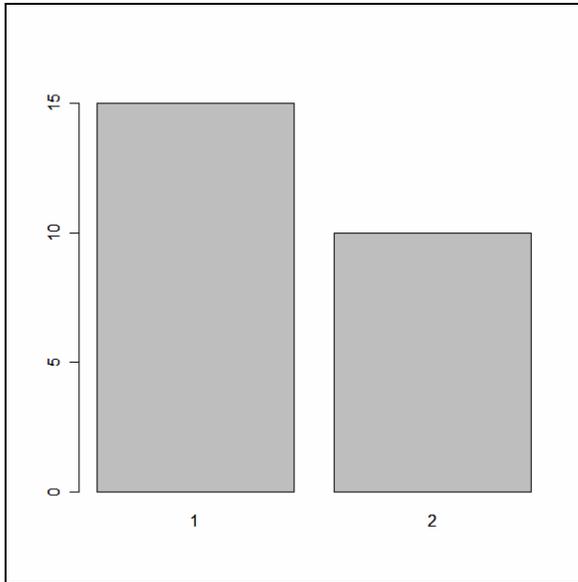


Figure 14. Do you see any link between hip-hop and jazz, blues, sorrow songs, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, bebop, or griot?

Findings for Figure 14: Where X-axis is:

1. Yes
2. No

Question 15. Do you think hip-hop/rap needs to evolve?

a. Yes: 89% (22)

b. No: 10% (3)

c. Undecided: %

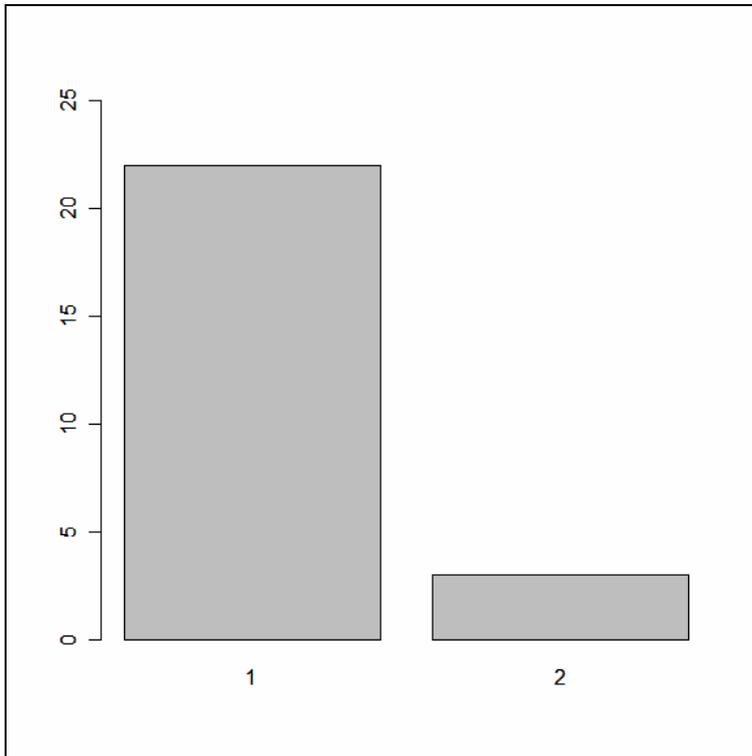


Figure 15. Do you think hip-hop/rap needs to evolve?

Findings for Figure 15: Where X-axis is:

0. Undecided

1. Yes

2. No

Question 16. Who do you feel helps to preserve hip-hop's immovability?

- a. Everyone: 99% (24)
- b. Artist
- c. Me: 1% (1)
- d. Consumer
- e. Record label/distributor

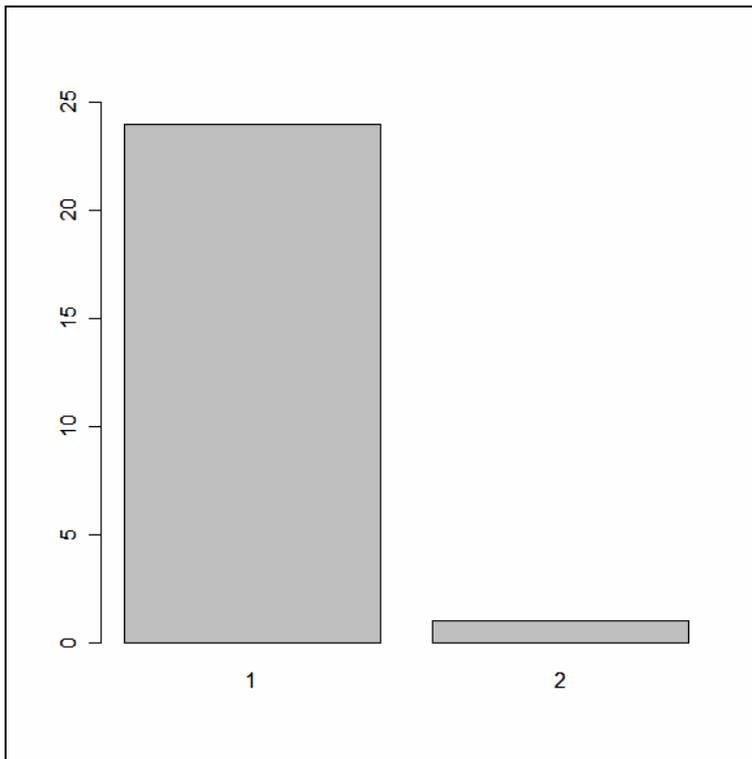


Figure 16. Who do you feel helps to preserve hip-hop's immovability?

Findings for Figure 16: Where X-axis is:

- 1. Everyone
- 2. Me
- 3. Artist
- 4. Consumer

Question 17. Name artist that you feel is simply in the movement for the money:

- a. Cash Money: 31% (8)
- b. Puff Daddy: 30% (8)
- c. Lil Kim: 9% (2)
- d. Jay-Z: 20% (5)
- e. Everyone: 10% (2)
- f. Other:

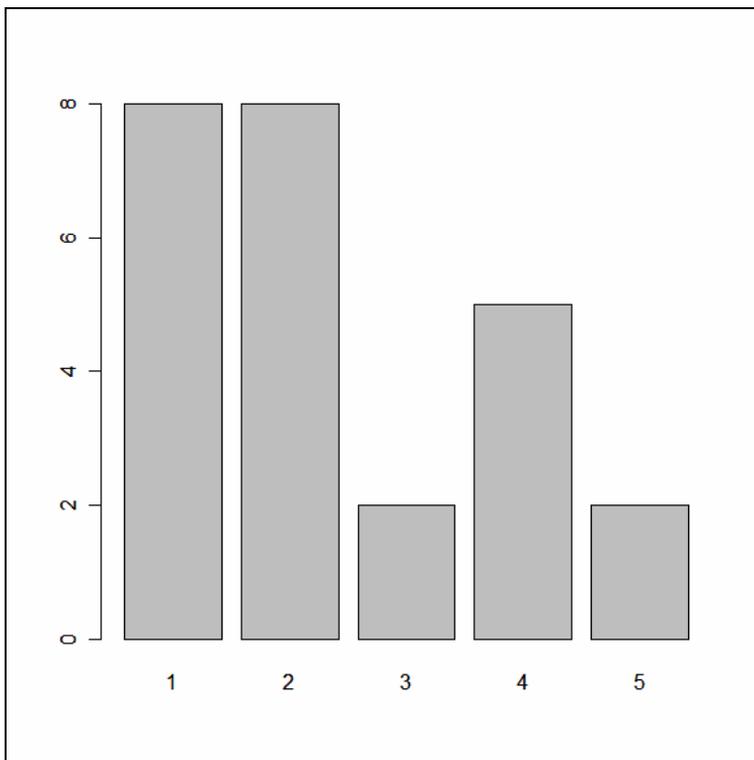


Figure 17. Name artist that you feel is simply in the movement for the money:

Findings for Figure 17: Where X-axis is:

- 1. Cash Money
- 2. Puff Daddy
- 3. Lil Kim
- 4. Jay-Z

5. Everyone
6. Other

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

We cannot [possibly] step into the same [spot in the same] river twice.
—Heraclitus.

In the process of researching and interviewing for this work, the writer found herself immersed in the phenomenon of the hip-hop music, the hip-hop musical movement, and of the postures and viewpoints of the hip-hop music audiences and publics of the little circulated yet much controversial hip-hop musical genre.

The writer is a part of hip-hop and a scholar rooted in finding the truth in the capacity of a consumer, a critic, and of an observer-participant through her interests in hip-hop worldview as a social political agency for persuading society toward conscience and consciousness building and drive. All the same, this researcher has been challenged by the important need to be guided by a holistic approach to handling and processing the collected data, and to be able to moderate her philosophical commitment to defending the humane African values involved in discourses on hip-hop, its political, economic, financial, and social world challenges.

As a non-biased scholar, the abovementioned caution has worked tremendously for the researcher in maintaining an open mind, and diligent desire to know and discover

new knowledge of hip-hop and to understand the criticisms of the movement, thus its economic, financial, social and political world aspects; to widen acceptance of its musical products and advocacy roles in the American world's social (communal, community, societal, collective, group, and common emotion, else popular culture), and racial (ethnic, cultural, national, international, and tribal) milieu.

While attending concerts, workshops, rallies, and seminars, the researcher was always able to keenly observe the phenomenon of hip-hop communication systems, even when the act of being a fan had seemed to overwhelm this other side of participating as an examiner of values and foibles of the hip-hop community's tendencies that attract both audience and critics' positive and negative reactions. The appearances served their combined functions as a background, and as the basis for the instrument (the questionnaire) of this study.

Individual interviews were conducted and coded in terms of observed themes, contexts, social and cultural values, and mores with a focused view to learning from the artists the dynamics of crucial hip-hop elements from their standpoint. The researcher was set to obtain their testimonies based on patterns of behavior and response from events, public opinions, and their efforts at imaging. Though individual interviews on group dynamics were the primary goal of this research, it was not without interest in group interactions and awareness relating to attitudes, opinions and the artist's personal evaluation of other artists as to what peers and group members were doing to improve the movement's image, socioeconomic status, upward mobility, and those concerns related to community and society services such as was discussed earlier about political prisoner

Abu Jamal Mumia, and whether an ADS Link is maintained through projects such as African Musical Tours and the South Africa AIDS Pandemic Elimination.

The data, written and vocal, collected and analyzed in this doctoral dissertation suggests that:

- (1) There is an evolving hip-hop and rap district of African-American Musical Complex that is a drive for political, economic, and financial emancipation of blackness in the Diaspora Americas' United States.
- (2) There is cognizance arising from the personal, one-on-one interviews with prominent hip-hop artists that bares awareness and commitment to the group's social responsibilities to community, family, society, the movement, and to the self in the following ways:
 - (a) The dimensional 'ambition to succeed in business and accumulate the wealth thrust,' of the hip-hop and rap art forms.
 - (b) There are a few that are 'ethnic-culture articulated and defense' commentary bent.
 - (c) There are a few that are 'Return to Africa aborigine directive,' of hip-hop and rap music persuasion.
 - (d) There are a few that are 'freestyle, all-American closure without the constraints of the ideological pigeonhole fright,' thus favoring individualism.' This group overlaps the next as it overlaps with, (a) without being as exclusive on the capital-wealth mobilization quest.

(e) Then there are the last few that, by and large, see the African-centered viewpoint as a politically commendable fact, but argue that what matters is the here and now life in the New World. For this group of artists going to Africa has only the nullifying, if not an overstated, value.

This study went even further to uncovered a number of other peoples such as females, males, (Gender); Black, Latino, Chicano, (Minorities), Youths (Generation X), and God-Worship Spiritual Congregation (Religion) issues as being the mainstay of hip-hop and rap compositions and productions. More of the artists interviewed have seen the opportunity for making money and increasing its acquired units. This is amazingly enlightening about the maturity of mind the artists have about the value of their cultural products and intellectual properties. Also, this is impressive, if only tacitly, on a test of corporate value of the hip-hop business world in Corporate America's products advertising and products promotion networking grip, when we have provided and examined the albums/record tracks conveying messages of the ad-copy varieties on Cadillac, Rolls Royce, MacDonald's Big Mac, Victoria's Secret, and other marketplace products lines including and beyond apparel, food, drugs, and automobiles. This component could create employment openings, expand news values and the uses of radio and television airtime, and of course, an additional News Desk for the tabloids.

Hip-hop stock market report angle of the mass media could be creative due to the notice here that this specific art design of hip-hop influence has given the valuable impression that besides being an opening for a welcome entry of hip-hop into mainstream market news economics and financial journalism, it enhances the result of mass media

employment that could result in a News Desk of the very near future. In which case, it may not remain just a “Stock Market Report” from the “Dow Jones” Industrial sources, but also “Stock Market Report” from the hip-hop and Rap Products Influence on Stocks Report that could showcase gains and losses that resulted for products, which advertised in hip-hop album tracks as advertisers’ billboards. For example, such a financial and economic journal report could take the form of report of product performances before, during, and after the products have been carried in album tracks as ‘spot advertisements.’ On the other hand, such a stock market report may extend to a comparative analysis of losses experienced by products and product lines that have not advertised in the hip-hop album tracks as opposed to roadside mounted ad-copy billboards for the spanned coverage periods.

Racist, generational, feminist and sexist commentaries appear to be a heavy measure of the hip-hop and rap messages, but the economic incentives are driven and shaped by the white male dominated corporate sponsorship side of the music industry. It has been observed that, like other areas of social life’s day to day politics, black women artists isolate and pursue their recognition causes as a separate social group from the black men artist category.

The knowledge gained on this issue is premised upon the already highly discredited vicious, black man versus black woman struggle with African-Americans in sports, commerce, industry, education, entrepreneurship, health and welfare that has taken place over the years as typified in the here cited example of Washington, DC area female audiences preferring to give accent to gender relevance whenever a black female

artist is in the District to perform a concert. The significant use of the African-centered approach to the investigation's data sourcing and treatment cannot be over-emphasized for its ethnographic method relevance. For it is clear from the treated data, the review of literature, and the contents of interview disclosures by the artists, that the researcher stayed on course as it pertains to Continental and Diaspora African concentric connectivity; always avoiding any disconnected points of contention with the merits and demerits of Rivera's uncanny attempts in her study suggesting a shared ownership of hip-hop and rap patent credits.

Given the emerging discoveries in this study, the African-centered instrumentation of method appear to have proven to be a voluminous potent device for ethnic-culture focused studies and is perhaps a study of advocacies and history-tracing functions. For example, the debate over the rightful, joint or sole ownership question of the blackness originality of hip-hop and rap enabled the researcher to locate the language, ideation and existing art forms and mannerisms with which she's been able to link hip-hop and rap genre as entirely a native, ethnic-culture African-American product. This thorough viewpoint was argued and explicated in this study when this researcher painstakingly interlinked hip-hop and rap mannerism, and message content and style to the Civil Rights Movement's themes, community, contexts, and language-use forms of African griot-Jeli, and its reactions to slavery conditions, police brutality, racial discrimination matters, none of which is a human experience that mankind is not and cannot authoritatively and historically trace and associate with Puerto Rico's New York City Ricans and Latinidad elements and community. Additionally, this researcher has

cited, for examination and determination of linkage validity, the relationships to date among soul, reggae, calypso, rumba, blues, the spirituals, jazz, African hi-life, griots, bebop, and rhythm and blues; whose hip-hop and rap foundations and fundamentals are nowhere near the vicinity of any ethnic culture history of the Puerto Rican Latin American race, or not without assisting their African heritage.

However, it is important to suggest an eventual improvement of the instruments of the investigation in a broader way for use in any future studies that would include interviewing the New York Rican artists in the Latinidad wing of the race-and-gender, new version side of the hip-hop and rap music movement to serve as a measure of balance between the opinions and views pertaining to the origins of the co-ownership claim reported by Rivera.

Absence of the above type of component view could be viewed as a bias in the present treatment of the subject of co-ownership of patent rights, whose motivating drive has been speculated in the literature from Wole Soyinka on the one hand, and, professor Amatokwu, on the other. Fidelis Amatokwu has argued that though hip-hop and rap genre could be an all-African heritage acquisition, its modern and post-modern art form to which the New York Ricans are attaching their suggestion of co-ownership of patent rights is in material and business particulars, environmentally African-American.

Yet, Amatokwu has nevertheless introduced a caveat, whereby he says he would like to see,, "...how the Puerto Ricans can successfully or unsuccessfully be able to plug the missing link subject of the contention in this axe to grind..." He therefore recommends that the efforts of future investigations as to how the Latinidad section of the

hip-hop and rap district could substantiate the warrant of their fringe benefit claim, or still, of their suggestion of co-ownership of hip-hop intellectual and cultural property with Diaspora America's African-America.

And, he doubts the success of such a venture, saying that, it remains, in the main, 'a tall order' endeavor. Except insofar as the crack connects to the outlook that the Ricans could be making the claim by passing through the concept of the 'Afro-ness' in the Afro-Cuban, or Afro-Brazilian that still makes the suggestion to be a perky-patch (personal interchange between the researcher and Fidelis Amatokwu 2005).

Dr. Amatokwu argues further,

Still the result of hip-hop and rap music's extensive universal appeal as well as the result of a preponderance of hip-hop and rap music message contents and formats, it would be increasingly difficult to restrict the tendency to assimilate and even create versions but not the blueprint issuance of the original hip-hop influence spheres of circulation within racial, social and cultural value boundaries; assimilation and direct imitation brands would evidently evolve to compete for the dollars in its labor and productivity, and in its stock and social as well as political commentaries market. (F. Amatokwu 2005)

After all, the wanton disenfranchisement that forms the large part of hip-hop and rap's political expressions' pamphleteering has wider society utility value, if not a global one. For even in the new world political and economic order, we are all individually, institutionally and collectively disenfranchised. Even the so-called oppressors are evidently disenfranchised through the activities of their own hands, or of the steps they take toward personal instead of social policy profits. All questions, or ways and means, of rightful or wrongful ownership and co-ownership suggestions have suddenly become matters of relative aggression that contributes to our joint undoing in angling to lay claim

to that which is not ours, be it that we're Black, Latino, Chicano, gay, lesbian, career oriented (married or single), feminist, youth, educator, stevedore, God or Satan Worshiper, landlord/landlady, tenant, artisan or musician, we are all and sundry disenfranchised in one way or another.

The discussion in chapter 1 started the introduction to hip-hop's worldview along which pathway we have found a collection of political-economic interest groups that would like to be counted as co-owners of the cultural and intellectual property known as the hip-hop genre. The study of hip-hop artists was pursued by using the African-centered point of view of data analysis for their roles, themes, techniques, contexts of their musical compositions and productions.

This study's assumptions and procedures of data processing issues were exhaustively examined, discussed and determined for their relevance in explaining hip-hop issues and developmental challenges.

Chapter 2 discussed the short-take biographies of various artists in relation to an evolution of hip-hop mores and significant developments in context of the efforts of Africans in America to be relevant to society and the problems in society. In addition, the researcher critically examined the past studies of hip-hop, and successfully treated the issues of why the African-centered technique is essential to the study of hip-hop artists' roles, themes, and techniques, contexts of their compositions, their productions, and their tameness toward the political, environmental, commercial, and socio-cultural leanings of United States capitalism in which they perform and advocate causes, attitudes and behavior changes.

Chapter 3 was devoted to achieving a systematic analysis of the values of the ethnographic methodology as it enhances the assessment of the assumptions about the usefulness of the African-centered perspective to the fluent study of the evolution of hip-hop in terms of the artists understanding of their own mindset and its inspirational sources, vide, the African culture roots of their speech acts expressed through the phraseological concept of hip-hop which has been referred to as African musical expression throughout this work.

Chapter 4 continued to set our sights on how such themes, and their constructive issues, are raised in the hip-hop expressive forms. We examined various techniques that include the use of “nommo,” the power of the spoken word, and other means through various personal interviews.

While in chapter 5 effort is made to merge and summarize the issues and personalities in contest within the study, vis-à-vis gender and racial complexities of hip-hop political strands of culture. Also, we’ve noted our observation that has borne the fact of varied socioeconomic statuses across the spectrum backgrounds-spread of previously lumped, notwithstanding, stereotype perception of hip-hop and rap artists earlier held to mean that coming from and being born in the miscalled black ghetto was also a synonym for being born poor. And in context of the innuendoes, we tried to interpret aspects of the socio-political considerations that overlay critics and audiences misperceptions relating to the hip-hop phenomenon.

These innuendoes are so highly structured on the subject of the hip-hop artist as “all the more a social misfit,” against whose vulgar influence their children and youths

ought to be shielded in the eyes, both of mainstream American elite, white and black parents, and concerning the hip-hop mission statements to liberate, enlighten, and mobilize riches and wealth in the manner of the workman and his or her revenue realization in the phrase, “making the money and increasing the units.” In other words, chapter 5 has brought every work to a conclusion that is accompanied by recommendations for further studies.

Conclusion

This study serves to change the notion that hip-hop artists are not consciously aware of their responsibilities to themselves, their audiences, community, to the meaning and essences of economic and financial resources mobilization, and to their socio-cultural worlds in shaping the output of their musical talents. It proved that the artists are able to locate and situate their musical talent resources in the contexts of African musical expression, which are designed with a focus to liberate citizens of their social worlds materially and spiritually through advocacy and other patterns of awareness campaigns borne in their musical compositions and productions.

The first goal of this study was to determine whether hip-hop artists are agents of meaningful bearing that focus on liberation from oppression, e.g., from youths disenfranchisement in postmodern United States. This attempt at making the determination was realized by allowing the artists to tell their stories in freestyle and have made their personal assessments apropos to how they see themselves in relation to their

audiences, their community, vide, their social responsibilities, their self help and investment planning. They have done these, each in his or her words without the researcher leading them to answer any question in a strait-jacketed fashion.

The second goal was also accomplished in that we desired and obtained the employment of the ethnographic method, which correctly is a free flow technique to data collection as gave the artists their own right to state what they understand to be the goals of their musical career and has allowed the artists to be met in their chosen, if needs be their natural habitats, vide, meeting them on familiar ground such as at concerts, workshops and seminars that have been seen as locations suitable for the artists to reason, talk and speak aggressively about their musical stock-in-trade. There was balance in the interview format and location for the artists and the researcher to give expression to the concept of the participant-observer propositions of ethnographic research. The goal originally was to have an equal amount of male and female artists to interview, however, staying true to the hip-hop world, without trying the male artists out numbered the female artists. This, too, became evident when trying to find artists to participant in this study. For instance, the writer was able to faithfully transcribe with a ethnographically prescribed combination of detached and emotional involvement paradigm without any overbearing influence upon what the artists articulated.

One of the advantages of this prescribed combination of the detached and the emotional mind involvement paradigm is that in embodying the balanced involvement, the writer was also able to convey their emotions, both as a scholar familiar with the issues in contest, and as a member of that hip-hop district and ethnic-culture. By this, the

researcher gives warrant to hip-hop's Continental and Diaspora African background particulars out of which the movement has mainly drawn its composite and industrious worldview. The author's reasoned personal preference to write on this subject in her capacity and position as a member of this movement has helped her to gain uninhibited access to various interviewees and their relevant functionaries that facilitated our appointments for interviews.

The third goal of this study was to incorporate the African-centered research perspective that so many outsiders consciously want to delete from hip-hop's identity, to wrongly and erroneously subsume the hip-hop and its peculiar good works under the rubrics of a standard Western World artistry. Facts borne out of the present study show how the movement is successful due to its dual African World cultural and American World capitalist monetary linkage achievements.

Additionally, one distinction this study has earned is in the use of the African-centered perspective to give the study its valid premise in that it effectively presented the study with a truthful rooting in an enduring Old World of African heritage that brought the entire contribution full circle to its Diaspora African cultural expressive self. Also, what the African-centered perception brought to bear on the validity of findings here is that it helped to direct our examination of relationships between being an artist who wants to make money and his or her social responsibilities.

This twin vehicular interest in making money and performing community level obligations have awarded unique privileges and respectability to the artists as it proposes that we take a fresh look at the artist as a worthy symbol of what should be emulated as a

positive cultural change agent. This fresh objective look at the artist would state of him or her as not an altogether dangerous “pot-head” as earlier mainstream America’s stereotype of the movement and its members as an ignoble “lot.”

Hip-hop and rap artists do some commendable works, especially that they seek not only to encode messages through their songs, but they are also able to decode, energize and transmit messages about our Industrial-Military Complex and society that are not solutions, but are of themselves embodied problems of society. As postmodern dialogue forms, hip-hop and rap are said to be rooted in African musical ways as reflected in the responses given at the interviews by the artists themselves, and as suggested by Black Studies scholars of Africa and African-American origin. One after the other, they have conceptualized a musical lineage expressed by the hip-hop artists who were interviewed for this study, and by those works whose songs and performances were used to describe the experiences of Diaspora Africans in the United States.

It has been observed in this study that the hip-hop art form does not only deal with mundane issues of the dysfunctional, poor black ghetto life concerning juvenile delinquent youths, but it also makes crucial comments on generations of daily mishandling of American lives, and of human deeds and misdeeds around the globe. This study is consummate and compelling in its uses of the African-centered analysis of hip-hop artists, of their socioeconomic, political and advocacy roles, themes, techniques, contexts, prestige suggestion, image, economics and their socio-cultural sources of the hip-hop musical art composition and production. This study is a departure from the simplistic, make-believe that critics and scholars alike have used through their one-way

speculations about the meaning behind the artists works. Instead, the study design and implementation gives the artists a direct communication opening to air their views and define their works while taking into consideration other points of view such as those of the participants. And given the opportunity, they have told a great deal about their works and challenges. In a nutshell, this study has allowed the artists a voice on how their works should be viewed and regarded as works of socio-cultural importance that is consciously guided by a vested interest in making good impressions as well as money.

Repeatedly in this study there have been references to hip-hop that was centered on uncovering the authentic foundations of the genre. A few of the artists made entirely honest disclosures in relation to the rich or poor socioeconomic statuses of their respective backgrounds prior to finding the limelight in a hip-hop musical career.

Here, we are tempted to argue that this response of total disclosure by the artists goes a long way in proving the idea that “epic memory” and hip-hop twirl into a union of intersections in which we are enabled to see, “who we’re, what we were, and what we can or will become.” To wit, a thorough going honest people, irrespective of the miscalled negative contributions of the stereotyped, make-shift innuendoes of the mainstream establishment sections of United States that “being born poor or rich, and hailing from the squalid ghetto environment or not, the artists in this study made “undistorted” open statements of fact as regards to their lives long before “the klieg light” of stardom and its corresponding riches. These were encouraging qualitative character testimonies and are worthy of note for their perceptual cue reversal implications that importantly contrast with unreasonably and importunately held views that being born

poor and hailing from the squalid ghetto background is tantamount to one also being a patented liar.

Though the above observation concerned a category of the interviewees such as Bahamadia, Kali and others, we have noted in this study that the life one knows while growing up might, or might not reflect how and why an individual may act in a certain way as an adult in a career, vocation, or a profession. For example the testimony of the artist, Talib Kweli who said in the interview that because his parents were both educators who took an interest in him as a growing child, what he liked and did, they were concerned as to the way in which he should be shaped as an African male living in America.

No doubt, his experience may have been very different from the so-called pathological life of other artists that testified of themselves as having grown up as juvenile delinquents. Talib Kweli claimed that his apparently enriched background helped him to understand the level of responsibility he now has as an artist. Again, we can see the same principle of total, unabridged self-disclosure being at work when we examine the life of Tupac Shakur, the late artist whose mother was a seventeen-year old jailed for a political crime. She was on drugs and left young Tupac to raise himself in the company of street soldiers as role models.

Nevertheless, the vicious chain was not entirely broken for Tupac Shakur who tried to amend his ways as an adult by choosing a slightly different path of behavior. Hence, he came into the lucrative business of hip-hop musical career, which did not last and ended badly. He behaved rebelliously and indulged in thug type acts for one, and

two, because it was in his blood to rely on the rebellious acts of a thug as a means of survival in street life. The contrast is evident between the life Talib Kweli leads as a son of educators and Tupac Shakur's life and works; some of which are the result of conscious and others the result of reflex predispositions, especially those that were just as violent and misogynistic as any mainstream rapper would compose and perform. Here, we have two very different rebellious artists of note in the hip-hop movement, one with educated parents who gave him dependable and enduring tools to navigate through life; compared to the other that was born in jail to a rebellious teenage mother. With its African roots nurtured by the Diaspora American struggles, the hip-hop movement picked up a few incredible resource entities along the way. However, no parents helped hip-hop's evolution directly, not in any specifically stated way and manner beyond Talib Kweli's indication. The movement was left to figure out the puzzle on its own. Hence, the results we see of behaviors that are often times misleading suggest that personalities and expected public images tend to be in conflict, a few of which were borne out in confessions within the interview texts of the artists. This researcher, upon serious evaluation does not think anything indicated by the artists in the interview pool had the impression of a forced confession. The artists appeared to be determined to upgrade the integrity of the setting in clear commitment to model a positive image of moral upliftment for children and youths.

With their notoriety and stardom, the artists are over-comers, pleased and happier about the supplications of this stage of their lives thereby looking at the ugly past as in fact an enlightening foundation stone for the difference that today's successes joyously

make as in the letters of the following Psalm 126 that chronicles how mankind should move from sorrow to joy. This is otherwise titled:

A Song of Degrees

- (1) When the Lord turned again to the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.
- (2) Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord has done great things for them.
- (3) The Lord has done great things for us; whereof we are glad.
- (4) Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.
- (5) They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
- (6) He that goes forth and weeps, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. (Holy Bible, King James Version, 800)

Indeed, it is prestigious to speak honestly about suffering that has helped to shape a successful side of life. After all, that which girds the Christian faith worldwide is their acclaim of Christ Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary as the essential preparation for the glory of a Christian life today. Thus, the observed trend in this study of frank talk of one's past by the hip-hop artists is not only revealing, it is indicative of false impression-correcting and charges-removing, a good sign of abundant honesty among this career class.

These artists have seen their parents playing and dancing to great music and talking about how great the old musicians were. At the same time, the Western World influence says that getting money at whatever cost is the way of “The American Dream.” The end result is the germane struggle, the conflict of self with self. The struggle is not in relation to right or wrong behavior due to the fact that there is no such thing as a good or a bad way in the context of trying to “make it” by way of the American Dream, which presupposes it is not a crime to make it by any means regardless; the crime indeed and in truth is in getting caught.

According to the American Dream, what in essence challenges a bidder is the reality of choices to make for climbing the rung of the mobility ladder. What then is the unfounded hue and cry over the ways of the hip-hop artist? She’s climbing the rung of the American Dream ladder, even a lot more diligently, lawfully than can be said about the ways of many of us that feud and force in disrespect of the American Way efforts of the hip-hop movement artists to survive and sustain the American value through the politics, roles, themes and contexts of their compositions and productions.

Recommendations

There is no extensive discussion on the subject of graffiti writers in this work. This is mainly in seeing that the idea of graffiti research is still not fully developed as to interact meaningful with our interest in the vulgarities of the hip-hop verbal productions treated here. There is still much confusion as to who the first graffiti writer is, neither has there been a more definitive indication of the drive and union of values associated with itself or with the hip-hop culture, nor as regards how it came to be domesticated by the mainstream culture. Except insofar as it is in relation to the matter of tattoos as fads, this makes it almost impossible to differentiate hip-hop intellectual property from its nowadays assumed urbane culture. Also, it is the notice that not all blackness hip-hop artists are sold on the idea of tight or tighter interaction with Africa, at least, not to the degree of traveling to and visiting Africa on a regular pilgrimage basis as Indians and Pakistanis would dare to indulge in going to India and Pakistan to deep their souls in the wells and fountains of Asian culture. Or as Europeans, Israeli and Chinese celebrities and cultural adepts would tend to indulge in going to Europe's Copenhagen, or to Jewish Jerusalem, or to China's Buddhist Temple, and rejuvenate their souls in the wells and fountains of the Ancient culture.

In the meantime, the researcher has decided to provide a list of forty top songs and interviews that a non-hip-hop fan or critic would like to listen to when seeking to familiarize oneself with the hip-hop movement's lingua franca, especially for their social

political poetics. For it could commence an interest for the non-hip-hop fan or critic and become an introduction to the hip-hop musical world and its ways and mindset:

- (1) Arrested Development
- (2) A Tribe called Quest
- (3) Bahamadia
- (4) Biggie Smalls for the love he could have made
- (5) Black Star including solo projects
- (6) Brand Nubians
- (7) Channel live
- (8) Common (Sense)
- (9) Dead Prez
- (10) De la Soul
- (11) Digable Planets
- (12) Gang Starr
- (13) Goodie Mob
- (14) Jay-Z for the heart he could have had
- (15) Jean Grae
- (16) Jeru Damaja
- (17) Kano
- (18) KRS-1 (Boogie Down Productions)
- (19) Last Emperor
- (20) Last poets and Gill Scott Heron, for all their work with hip-hop artists

- (21) Mc Lyte
- (22) Mecca Starr
- (23) M. O. P.
- (24) Nasir Jones early work
- (25) Nefertiti
- (26) N. W. A. for having brave hearts
- (27) Onyx
- (28) Outkast
- (29) Paris
- (30) Pete Rock and CL Smooth
- (31) Poor Righteous Teachers
- (32) Public Enemy
- (33) Queen Latifah
- (34) Rage Against the Machine
- (35) Rakim early works
- (36) Saul Williams
- (37) The Def Squad and Ram Squad
- (38) The Fugees including solo projects
- (39) The Roots early works for the hunger and some recent work for artistic brilliance
- (40) Tupac Shakur

There are also those artists that are due honorable mention and cannot be left out such as Kool G Rap, Slum Village, Murs, Kool Moe Dee, Run-DMC, Flow Brown, Salt 'n' Pepa, Slick Rick, Pharcyde, Pharaoh Monch, EPMD, Wu-Tang Clan, AmunMiraaj and Queen GodIs.

Also recommended here is that effort needs be made to encourage research on the childhood encounters of hip-hop artists that would essentially feature childhood molestations. For instance, in the course of this study and previously in interactions with some of the artists, this researcher came across this enormous secret of artists that was confidentially disclosed; how they have been sexually abused by either family members or by someone they took to be a mentor. The commoditization of the hip-hop movement has been so successful because the artists have given up their powers of attorney to corporate entities. Bell Hooks discussed the white consumer support of misogynist rap that reproduces the idea that black males are violent beasts and brutes (1992). It is quite commendable.

This action of disempowerment displayed by many hip-hop artists does not mean that hip-hop is not a continuation of an African roots by Diaspora Africans in the United States. That's not it. Rather it simply means a condition of the artist behaving realistically through marrying cultural politics with the industrial sociological underpinnings of hip-hop, its cultural economy and this all-important political psychology and personality-type communication in our achievement-bent, capitalist-oriented image communication of being well-rooted and being well qualified to reap and enrich oneself in an environment where one sows.

Here, the researcher must issue a warranted advice to the artists and their handlers to encourage them to actively pursue and maintain a somewhat annual working-visit presence in one of several attractive African culture centers on the African Continent; man does not live by bread alone to continue to renew a feeling of substantiation toward one's cultural sources of pride and motivation. Culture and capitalism are never in conflict; rather the two harmonize so well as to enhance prestige, image, and repose. Amazingly, culture is so positively and as negatively stubborn in its hidden thread grip upon every man. Indeed culture is the strongest social security instrument of life that even when you play it down, it becomes the excuse of the environmental entities to degrade you, seeing that you're running away from your essence, therefore, denying yourself, you are first and foremost, the "I am that I am."

The reader could just imagine the significance of this apportionment and the strong defense it has offered here in the matter of who owns hip-hop and who actually originated the composition and production of the hip-hop musical art form in postmodern America. The black artists could have lost the argument of rightful ownership had it not been for the Africa-ness and by extension the Afro-ness centrality of the defense offered for it in this study, or else, the miscalled New York City Ricans would have had the suggested illusory claim on the false, yet equally important, presumption that if hip-hop and rap are as ghetto as any United States inner city community, and its popular culture imitativeness then they, too, could very well qualify to lay claim of joint ownership of hip-hop patent rights and successes. But no, we traced the hidden strings, nay, the hidden culture of soul, the spiritual, bebop, reggae, jazz, rhythm and blues, blues, et cetera, that

are all African linked and African sourced, stimuli-response vector of this intellectual property rights defense.

Vacation trips and concert tours in and out of an African country or two every year may not net the dollars to increase the economic and financial units that move our capitalist spirit and zest as would trips and tours to Tokyo, or Paris, or Stockholm, or London, still vacation trips and concert tours to Africa is a louder ovation for the artist's personality because it gathers him or her to the beginning as it does to the end of being somebody in our all-purpose, anything goes, American society.

For it is often the advice of this researcher's dad to his children, that, "When one does good works, he or she is shining himself or herself; he or she is not doing it for anybody else; but that mankind would see the place of goodness even inside the ugly confusion that propaganda as lie-telling works in all of us." One's relationship with culture is much like one's relationship with his or her driver's license, it expires and one is no longer sure that he or she has any lawful right to the use of the tax-payer's road; or he or she is simply hoping to pander to whims and caprices to verbalize his or her faking of life's power.

After all, when one exhibits a sign of disempowerment in his or her action and trade, it is commendable humility that shows there is room to gain empowerment, and to re-structure one's basis of means to an end. But when one takes on the view that actively links with his or her essence no longer matters because of some extant ephemeral and vain chances of spasmodic life, onlookers wonder how cut off from one's God-assigned shadows which equals to one's actual physically accompanying dark mirror that's ever on

the grounds after and about us and goings and comings that's always plus those hidden cultural strings that even equips and blesses us everywhere, in every trade and or vocation we find ourselves. Fortunately for the hip-hop movement, the case of Ancestral Divine Sacrifice or ADS Link also encourages prayers and labor toward self-enrichment and wealth mobilization, and for that matter, leaves room for one to change or improve his or her format of behavior from time to time.

This may include the crucial need to go to advance commercial training centers for purposes of enrolling and participating in short-take workshops that assist with learning how to follow up and understand transactions, contract terms and negotiations and those other financial instruments that enable the individual artist to track and comprehend stock market and revenue generating mechanics of the hip-hop trading commodities. Having to learn the mechanisms of commodity trading can make the difference in the world for the industrial side of the hip-hop business, especially now that hip-hop album tracks may carry products advertising, promotion, and marketing. For unless one can read the charts and be able to interpret and count how many times one's advertizing carrying album is played per radio station and/or on television, it could be difficult to know when one is being under-rated, under-paid, and cheated of realized and accrued profits. This anxiety has featured in a few of the interviews for this study, and it is a legitimate dissatisfaction concern. And regarding the intellectuality and awareness levels of involvement of the hip-hop movement with its system of defining a worldview, this researcher could only summarize their aspects and dimensionalities in this manner: They're familiar with steps, worthy steps to the definition and helping of their roles

through proper identification of relevant, topical themes of social life and problems of society that are in need of commentary. Clearly, they are showing competence in the main, toward designing and evolving by the familiar metaphorical word processors used for communicating their linguistic competence.

It is apparent that the artists are especially in tune with the social problems and human conditions of society as it implies to their ability to associate themselves with the rhetorical contexts that are supportive of their acceptance-and-applause needs, which are important to enhancing their prestige among audiences, and for attracting to their musical commodities the attention of the business community and of the commerce and industry patrons. Beyond the essence of increasing the financial units of the credit column of their sponsorship ledger is the fact that, also, they care about the need for articulation of socio-cultural identity needs of their primary ethnic-culture communities when as reported in this study, they sometimes strive to help such social causes like those of political prisoners, removing and funding the elimination of the AIDS Pandemic plaguing Africans in South Africa and elsewhere on the African Continent.

These are instruments for prestige suggestion that invariably offers up the hip-hop artists as very important partners in progress, and they are therefore taken as vital opinion-shaping leaders. As previously stated, someone has compared them to “CNN,” the global, Cable Network News. They are essentially proving that they are musical business people. These points are not only the focus of, or the met-content-criteria observations of this study, yet, the foregoing discoveries of issues and events of performance and life in the hip-hop district have appropriately and significantly served as

indicators of the essence and aptness of the title and subtitle to this doctoral dissertation that reads: *An Afrocentric Analysis of Hip-Hop Musical Art Composition and Production: A Case of Its Roles, Themes, Techniques, and Contexts*.

It is imagined from time to time, there is need to renew and recall knowledge of how we were and what we have the potential to become, never forgetting how we were because such epic memory has significant advisory and guiding function to leading life. The work that I have tried to do here as a scholar of African-American Studies with the African Diaspora Studies bent has been a task that has consumed my emotions for a long time. Beyond this fact, I am glad I was able to further explore what several other African and Diaspora Studies, specifically those Diaspora Studies scholars before me who attempted to investigate, yet, not with as much depth as I have attempted to achieve, especially in the context of Diaspora African musical expressions, e.g., my claim in the form of a hypothetical argument now substantiated successfully with the personal interviews of the artists that at any point in time would be deemed an encouraging contribution to knowledge in the Liberal Art Faculty of Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Early musicologist, Eileen Southern, whose job was singular in scope, has stated that:

...since the immediate purpose of the present work is to record the facts of history, which must precede aesthetic and stylistic evaluations, I have not tried to make explicit a definition of black American music. I have tried to provide a solid and useful basis [for judging my work and] for discussion of the questions of its definition. (Southern 1972)

Hip-hop reflects the structure of struggles, while at the same time; the artists and the movement have been discovered to be seeking validation of their survival techniques, their need for respect and a courting of an image toward “making it” in modern America. However, the duty of the hip-hop scholar, or of any African writer is to avail his or her intellectual tools toward uncovering the dynamic outlines and structures of behavior of studied groups alongside studying audience reactions to the behaviors that the groups respectively and collectively emit in line with their functions as entertainers and as public and private citizens of society. The researcher can see that the work expands the knowledge bases about hip-hop while continuing to extend what Southern, Smith, Christian and other African-centered writers were able to focus on. I see that I made an impressive review of the hip-hop stock market report by pointing to how brand names of commodities that ranged from automobiles, apparel and food and drugs companies that now buy into hip-hop album tracks as alternative billboards and stock exchange trades that, for example, increased shares by five to twenty dollar each time a radio station played an album that advertised and promoted a brand name.

This research shows that this commoditization is offered as a new delight and that it is a lot more exquisite than usual, tending to dare the challenge to the artists to adapt their talents toward products promotion and toward commodities trading. The problem is not that hip-hop is not representing its heritage acquittals. Fidel Rodriguez, an activist and a radio producer-host at Los Angeles KPFK’s 90.7 FM clarifies it well when he says:

I would not have a problem with sex and materialism (in) hip-hop, if there was a balance. If kids had a chance to hear lyrics from artists who make

positive and inspiring work, if more views were represented. (Rodriguez 2005)

There are always younger emcees waiting to make that dollar as there are audiences waiting to buy the products promoted and advertised on the album tracks of hip-hop music. In fact, the engagement with promoting and advertising products could turn out to be the uncharted other way of obtaining and gaining for the hip-hop art form and the movement, the previously mitigated entry into mainstream American psyche and acceptance, because it would mean and imply commendable industrial relevance of hip-hop given the large audience pool that also means and implies a large captive consumer pool in the hip-hop musical district. Except that hip-hop as a union of values in which we are enabled to see who we are, what we were and that we have an abundance of potential to become even more, if we give each individual artist and the collective the choice as to what equitably must be bequeathed to the next generation to evolve as their own African musical expression, but it must be accompanied by good works and a continuing Ancestral Divine Sacrifice Link to continue to energize the social order of the people's struggles.

Here, it is noted that this generation has introduced a genre that extends the latitude of the acceptable blackness musical composition and production that is thereby called the hip-hop musical movement. They have added it to earlier accepted latitudes or genres of soul, the spiritual, rhythm and blues, reggae, jazz, calypso, rumba, bebop, griot-Jeli and others.

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