Keepin' it Real: From the Bronx to Cape Town, an Analysis of Hip-Hop in South Africa

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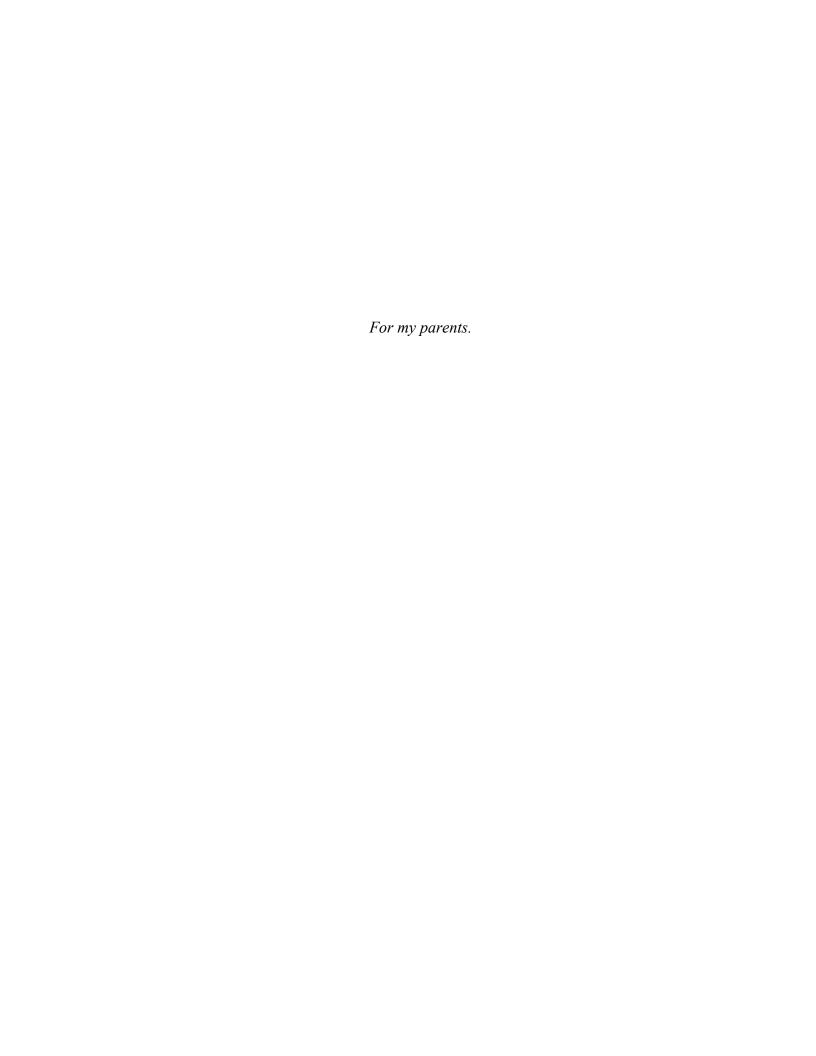
Advised by Professor Kevin Gaines

For my parents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<ins>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</ins>

INTRODUCTION

Hip-hop music and culture has, only recently, become both an acceptable and also a popular field of historical research and inquiry. Since Tricia Rose laid the groundwork for the critical analysis of hip-hop in her seminal work, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, scholars have examined and analyzed the various aspects of hip-hop and its roots in African American and Afro-Caribbean musical and cultural traditions.[1] Much of hip-hop scholarship, at least historical hip-hop scholarship, uses hip-hop as a vehicle to talk about larger problems in African American and minority communities in the United States who are often the victims of unfair judicial and governmental policies.[2] When scholars refrain from using hip-hop as a mechanism to investigate contemporary African American culture, they often examine the "authenticity" of different forms of hip-hop both inside and outside of the United States. Scholars such as Russell A. Potter link hip-hop to some ethereal conceptions of African American and Afro-Caribbean cultural and musical histories whereby the authenticity of a hip-hop derivation is determined based on whether the adoptees have any link to these histories.[3]

However, the sort of restrictive analysis proposed by Potter ignores not only the global popularity of hip-hop, but also the degree to which various communities and cultures have attached to hip-hop. The idea of "authenticity" itself invites a problematic discourse on cultural ownership that must not only identify the individuals responsible for the

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[1] Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
[2] M.K. Asante, *It's Bigger than Hip-Hop: The Rise of the Post Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).
[3] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-12.

determining authenticity, but also the mechanisms that offer an accurate evaluation of authenticity. Furthermore, in the case of hip-hop music and culture, arguments that link authenticity to the United States and to the African American communities that gave rise to hip-hop, must deal with the fact that some of the individuals responsible for creating hip-hop have essentially gone on missions of cultural and musical proselytization, such as Afrika Bambaataa.

In addition to problematic discourses on authenticity, most of the research into hip-hop music and culture has focused on hip-hop in the United States. The US-centric bias of hip-hop scholarship has contributed to the construction of a skewed hip-hop narrative that focuses only on the various iterations of hip-hop music in the United States. While an applicable and acceptable perspective in the early years of hip-hop, hip-hop's current status as a global phenomenon requires that attention also be paid to the hip-hop's existence in other countries and communities.[4] My thesis contributes to the discourses on non-US based forms of hip-hop. Furthermore, within local contexts, my thesis attempts to arrive at notions of authenticity through an analysis of acceptance of different hip-hop groups in South Africa. In South Africa, I examine the emergence of an endogenous hip-hop community in the Cape Flats region of Cape Town during apartheid and the appropriation of hip-hop music and culture by the Coloured community of South Africa. Next, I look at the appropriation of hip-hop by the white South African community after the end of apartheid, with particular attention paid to the controversial rap group Die Antwoord.

The first chapter of my thesis gives a general background and history of hip-hop in the United States. Generally, it examines the various cultural and musical factors that

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[4] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-12.

influenced its development. More specifically, it looks at the various individuals responsible for developing hip-hop into a full-fledged musical and cultural phenomenon. Consequently the first chapter includes an analysis of contributions by people such as Afrika Bambaataa and DJ Kool Herc. After a cursory overview of the history of hip-hop, the first chapter transitions into an analysis of previous historical, or otherwise academic, research into hip-hop culture and music.

The second chapter examines the history of hip-hop in South Africa during apartheid and its influence on the non-white South Africans who suffered under the discriminatory policies of the National Party during its long rule. In particular, it focuses on the introduction and development of hip-hop in the Cape Flats region of Cape Town and the Coloured South Africans that inhabited Cape Flats. Different sociopolitical issues and difficulties created by South Africa's policy of apartheid directly influenced the evolution of hip-hop culture in South Africa. Therefore, a general background about apartheid and some of its policies are discussed in this chapter. This chapter seeks to evaluate hip-hop amongst the non-white population during apartheid as a case study in the development of non-American formations of hip-hop.

Apartheid defined and shaped early hip-hop in South Africa and the memory of apartheid, and the repressive and racist government that supported it, continue to influence the lyrical content of South African hip-hop music.[5] Non-white South Africans found themselves in a similar situation to African Americans during segregation and suffered under institutionalized racism that limited their economic opportunities and prevented their

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[5] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 105-144.

participation in social and political environments. While the exact conditions and institutions of segregation differed between non-white South Africans and African Americans, both groups faced analogous hardships and limited access to quality government resources. A primary component of the second chapter is the analysis of the evolution of hip-hop after its initial introduction and the identification of the people and communities responsible for infusing hip-hop cultural and musical elements imported from the United States with the cultural and musical heritage of South Africa. Furthermore, this chapter explores issues of identity and race in South Africa amongst different racial groups and the potential role racial identity played in the assimilation of hip-hop culture and music in Cape Town.

While this thesis generally tackles the issue of "South African hip-hop", the focus is on hip-hop in the Cape Flats region of Cape Town. Before hip-hop transformed into a national movement in the United States, the term "hip-hop" meant the South Bronx, where hip-hop was born, shaped, and still thrives. Like the South Bronx, the Cape Flats region of Cape Town is synonymous not only as the first place that hip-hop took hold in South Africa and the region where young hip-hop artists still ply their trade, but also as a region where authentic South African hip-hop calls home and serves as a litmus test for the authenticity of all other forms of South African hip-hop. On the edges of Cape Town and under the repressive regime of the National Party, hip-hop flourished into an expressive and political cultural form influenced by both American hip-hop and a long history of diverse African musical and cultural traditions. In the third chapter, hip-hop amongst the white Afrikaner population is analyzed and the view of hip-hop groups like Die Antwoord, an internationally popular South African hip-hop duo, in the Cape Flats hip-hop community is dissected.

The third chapter focuses on the non-traditional appropriation of hip-hop by the white population of South Africa, Afrikaners, after the end of apartheid and the establishment of a new non-racial South African government under the direction of the African National Congress. Consequently, the third chapter seeks to evaluate, by way of interviews and other primary source material, the ways in Afrikaners have appropriated hip-hop and whether these manifestations of hip-hop can be considered authentic or not. Ultimately, Afrikaner hip-hop is evaluated from two perspectives. First, it is analyzed within the context of the South African hip-hop scene. The third chapter seeks to gain a sense of whether Afrikaner hip-hop is seen as authentic from the perspective of the South African hip-hop community. Second, Afrikaner hip-hop is evaluated from a global perspective. Essentially, the third chapter evaluates if a white population can successfully adopt a cultural and musical form so often associated with African American culture. While still a minority in South Africa, since white populations occupy a position of privilege in many other countries where hip-hop has taken hold, the case of hip-hop among Afrikaners presents a unique opportunity to evaluate the dissemination of hip-hop in a non-normal setting.

CHAPTER ONE: AN ORIGIN STORY

In the shadows of ancient castles and modern skyscrapers, young men and women in baggy clothes dance to syncopated beats laced with edgy lyrics. Increasingly, these "B-boys" and "B-girls" are a more common sight in ultra conservative South Korea, where breakdancing, along with other aspects of hip-hop culture, has turned into a national obsession. In fact, "B-boying" is so popular in South Korea, the government of Seoul sponsors an annual tournament, called R-16 Korea, to advertise the city and promote tourism.[1][2] Musically, hip-hop is an integral component of Korean pop music – "K-Pop" – and artists such as Park Jae-Sang, better known as PSY, incorporate rap and hip-hop rhythms into their songs.[3][4] However, hip-hop's popularity in South Korea is not an isolated phenomenon. From the South Bronx, where it was born roughly four decades ago, hip-hop has spread all over the world and commands a global market worth hundreds of billions of US Dollars.[5][6]

Hip-hop developed during the early 1970s in basement house parties and in nightclubs where disc jockeys – "DJs" – engaged their patrons by "rapping" over different rhythms and melodies cut from popular tracks. Hip-hop's first DJs used phonograph

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[1] Jeff Chang, "So you think they can break-dance?" *Salon*, June 28, 2008, accessed February 13, 2013, http://www.salon.com/2008/06/26/korean_hiphop/.

[2] "R-16 KOREA WORLD B-BOY MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIP," last modified December 2012, http://www.r16korea.com/xe/.

[3] "Psy," KBS World, accessed February 15, 2013, http://rki.kbs.co.kr/english/program/program_artist_detail.htm?No=10071.

[4] "15 Korean Rappers You Should Know That Aren't Psy," *XXL*, last modified February 12, 2013, accessed February 13, 2013, http://www.xxlmag.com/rap-music/2013/02/15-korean-rappers-you-should-know-thats-not-psy/.

[5] Michael Arrington, "Global Grind: Ajax, Finally, For The Hip-Hop Demographic," *Tech Crunch,* September 26, 2007, accessed January 10, 2013, http://techcrunch.com/2007/09/26/global-grind-ajax-finally-for-the-hip-hop-demographic/.

[6] Jeff Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World," *Foreign Policy* 163 (2007): 61.

turntables and DJ mixers to create rhythmic beats uninterrupted by singing or lyrics. Clive Campbell – DJ Kool Herc – isolated the instrumental portions of songs – the "breaks" – and created continuous rhythms that he used for house parties he hosted in the basement of his home in Harlem. Campbell and other DJs such as Grandmaster Flash and Afrika Bambaataa developed DJing into a musical form that engaged and enthralled their audiences. While these first DJs made tracks without lyrics, they also regularly engaged in poetry or spoke over their music in a boastful manner – a technique called "toasting", borrowed from Jamaican oral and musical traditions. Soon, others copied the techniques developed by Campbell and his peers, where DJs would speak or use poetry over the beats they created, into a genre of music where "MCs" or "rappers" rhymed over beats with catchy lyrics reminiscent of African American and Afro-Caribbean oral traditions.[7][8][9]

The music pioneered by DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grandmaster Flash, and others appealed to kids who spray-painted over walls, and dancers who invented new ways to move to music. In Harlem, teenagers and other young people used aerosol spray cans to create vivid and colorful messages on the rough brickwork of neglected buildings and walls. These forms of artistic protest railed against political and social injustice, but some also helped brighten neglected buildings and served as truly beautiful pieces of artwork.[10][11]

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[7] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: Picador, 2005), 1-67.

[8] Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-63.

[9] Russell A. Potter, *Spectacular Vernaculars: Hip-Hop and the Politics of Postmodernism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 1-54.

[10] Katherine Neer, "Hip-Hop and Graffiti," *How Stuff Works,* accessed January 10, 2013, http://www.howstuffworks.com/hip-hop2.htm.

[11] Saskia De Melker, "The History of American Graffiti: From Subway Car to Gallery," *PBS News Hour*, March 31, 2011, accessed January 15, 2013,

Break-dancers – "B-boys" and "B-girls" – invented a new way to dance to the tracks spun

by neighborhood DJs. Called "breaking" by members of the hip-hop community, this new

form of dance was inspired by Kung Fu films, musicians such as James Brown, and

traditional gymnastics.[12] Graffiti and breaking developed in parallel with DJing and MCing,

and all four represent the traditional "four pillars" of hip-hop culture. While it is impossible

to not mention all four in a discussion about the history and background of hip-hop music

and culture, this thesis will focus on hip-hop music and only refer when necessary to hip-

hop dance and street art.[13] In the context of this thesis, the term hip-hop generally refers to

hip-hop music.

The Sugarhill Gang, Run DMC, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, as well as

many other pioneers of hip-hop music and culture, propelled hip-hop into national

popularity with edgy beats, catchy rhymes, and risqué lyrics that commented on everything

from clothing to racial and social inequality. Hip-hop evolved from a musical subgenre

where DJs rapped over tracks cut together from the instrumental portions of different

popular songs into a full-fledged musical and cultural movement. As hip-hop culture and

music seeped out from Harlem in the 1970s, people from every background appropriated

aspects of hip-hop culture and contributed to its commodification and commercialization.

Therefore, while hip-hop was born in the South Bronx, it evolved outside of the precise

cultural aesthetics that gave birth to it. Consequently, questions naturally arose about the

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http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/blog/2011/03/the-history-of-american-graffiti-from-subway-car-to-gallery.html.

[12] Adam Mansbach, "The Ascent of Hip-Hop: A Historical, Cultural, and Aesthetic Study of B-Boying," *A&E*, May 24, 2009, Accessed January 20, 2013, www.boston.com/ae/books/articles/2009/05/24/the_ascent_of_hip_hop/.

[13] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: Picador, 2005), 1-67.

authenticity of hip-hop music and culture outside of Harlem, and later, outside the United States.[14] [15]

At its core, hip-hop culture is the realization of minority culture, both racial and sociopolitical. Specifically, hip-hop continues and echoes the musical traditions of the slaves and workers forcibly brought to the United States and various islands in the Caribbean from all over Africa. Initially these people used music and similar cultural heritage as a way to cope with their situation and band together, even though many came from different parts of Africa, were ethnically dissimilar, and spoke different languages. The descendants of American and Caribbean slaves used their cultural and social heritage to invent and develop multiple genres of music that were subsequently appropriated, and arguably stolen, by the very people who repressed them. Blues, jazz, funk, gospel, rhythm and blues, and rock 'n' roll were all created by African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans in the United States, but became so popular that these musical genres were eventually absorbed into mainstream culture. In the context of American history, this meant that the very people who had systematically oppressed and discriminated against them for centuries – the white majority, consumed and appropriated distinctly African American music.[16]

After the Civil Rights Movement, the situation of African Americans did not improve dramatically. While extreme forms of Southern segregation officially ended, multiple forms of *de facto* persecution occurred all over the country and African Americans

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[14] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: Picador, 2005), 1-67.

[15] Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 64-176.

[16] Samual A. Floyd Jr. *The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History From Africa to the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

continued to be politically and economically marginalized. Even to this day, systematic

oppression of African American voting, redistricting of dense African American

neighborhoods, discriminatory laws and legal practices, and continued divestment from

inner city educational infrastructures undercut African American social mobility and

political involvement. In the 1970's, hip-hop culture and activism filled the gap left by the

unofficial end of the Civil Rights movement and provided disenchanted youths with an

outlet to express pent up frustration and anger over their circumstances. One of the early

pioneers of hip-hop, Afrika Bambaataa, a former gang leader himself, utilized hip-hop as a

means to help combat gang violence and started the Universal Zulu Nation, an organization

designed to promote hip-hop as a peaceful form of expression for poor youths.[17] [18] [19]

Bambaataa, otherwise known by his real name Kevin Donovan, helped develop and

transform "break-beat deejaying" into a full fledged musical art form. However, his most

important contribution to hip-hop was probably his creation of the Universal Zulu Nation.

While the Universal Zulu Nation has undergone a number of changes since its creation in

the 1980s, it still persists even to this day as an international organization with independent

branches in multiple countries. Bambaataa created the Universal Zulu Nation with the

intention of spreading hip-hop culture to the rest of the world. His organization espouses a

mixture of religious and practical beliefs such as the belief in an Abrahamic God as well as

the belief that all things – for example, the Universe and creation – are based on

mathematics. This eclectic mixture of beliefs appeals to many disparate and unique groups

[17] M.K. Asante, *It's Bigger than Hip-Hop: The Rise of the Post Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).

[18] Travis Gosa, "Hip-Hop Politics, Activism, and the Future of Hip-Hop," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 21 (2009): 240-246.

[19] Tricia Rose, *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop–and Why It Matters* (New York: BasicCivitas): 2008.

and contributed to the popularity of the Universal Zulu Nation across the world. Consequently, the popularity and success of the Universal Zulu Nation also helped spur the popular spread of hip-hop culture and music.[20]

While the Universal Zulu Nation helped spread the gospel of hip-hop around the world by organizing concerts, setting up satellite organizations, and handing out hip-hop music and paraphernalia in what essentially amounted to cultural proselytization.[21] [22] Hip-hop also appealed, in general, to suppressed and discriminated minority groups as well as working class youth of all backgrounds. Born from the struggles of African American and Afro-Caribbean communities during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, hip-hop gave young people a voice when no one would normally listen. The politically charged lyrics of groups such as Public Enemy criticized the establishment for racist laws and institutions and popularized an antagonistic, but intelligent form of hip-hop music that simultaneously challenged the status quo as well as their peers to engage their communities for the better. In the beginning, groups like Public Enemy were not oddities; instead they epitomized the political and activist spirit that defined early hip-hop.

The countries that took to hip-hop culture and music most quickly were those that had people with similar histories of repression and discrimination as African Americans in the United States, such as England and France. Therefore, it makes sense that hip-hop spread with the most rapidity in European countries, which not only participated in the slave trade and therefore had some descendants of slaves, but also historically repressed migrant

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[20] Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: Picador, 2005), 89-214.
[21] Jeff Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World," *Foreign Policy* 163 (2007): 58-65.
[22] "Hip-Hop History," Universal Zulu Nation, accessed January 15, 2013, http://www.zulunation.com/hip_hop_history_2.htm.

populations that were the vestigial remnants of their colonial empires. For example, in France, hip-hop spread rapidly amongst tenants in the French equivalent of urban housing projects – HLM or "Habitation à Loyer Modéré". After World War 2, a high demand for manual labor saw an influx of workers from French colonies in Africa and territories in the Caribbean. These workers lived in the HLM provided by the government because the conditions of their work generally afforded few benefits and left them with few options and or money to look for better housing. Not only were these migrant workers forced into economically depressed situations, they also suffered from a government that refused to grant the workers from Africa any sort of benefits since they were not citizens of France or one of her territories. France's large African and Afro-Caribbean population proved to be an extraordinarily receptive audience for American hip-hop and these communities absorbed both the musical styling as well as the underlying activist and disgruntled tones that defined early American hip-hop. Consequently, France became and is still hip-hop's largest market outside of the United States and France produced the first international hip-hop star outside of the United States, MC Solaar.[23] [24]

The United Kingdom, like France, quickly took to this new American cultural export. However, unlike France, the states of the United Kingdom – England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland – developed a similar brand of DJing and toasting to the United States in the 1960s and 1970s thanks to the influence of Jamaican immigrants. These immigrants deployed the same "toasting" techniques over DJ tracks in the same way as DJ Kool Herc and other hip-hop pioneers in the United States. Hip-hop in the United Kingdom, like

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[23] André J. M. Prévos, "Hip-Hop, Rap, and Repression in France and in the United States," *Popular Music and Society* 22 (1998): 67-84.
[24] André J. M. Prévos, "The Evolution of French Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture in the 1980s and 1990s," *The French Review* 69 (1996): 713-725.

France, was heavily influenced by American hip-hop and many of the early hip-hop artists attempted to emulate and recreate not only the accents of their American heroes, but also their styles. This situation and early development of hip-hop in the UK created a dilemma for the artists and hip-hop practitioners who wanted UK hip-hop to use hip-hop as a means to comment on social and political issues, much in the same way that early hip-hop was utilized in the United States. Therefore, after an initial period of emulation, hip-hop in the UK diverged heavily from the influence of American hip-hop and incorporated elements unique to the UK cultural and musical scenes. This divergence allowed the proliferation of a wide range of different hip-hop forms and subgenres that continue to test the musical and cultural boundaries both in the UK and in the United States. These new forms of hip-hop melded electronic, funk, trap, house, and electric dance music with elements of hip-hop such as rap, DJing, and breakdancing and resulted in the establishment of diverse brands of UK hip-hop with crossover appeal in the United States.[25] [26]

Beyond France and the United Kingdom, the two best examples of international appropriation of hip-hop music, hip-hop culture also found an audience in East Asia – China, Korea, and Japan. As Jeff Chang notes:

> Inside the steaming walls of a nightclub in the heart of one of the world's most dynamic cities, you can hear the sounds of the future. Hundreds of people gyrate rhythmically as a DJ spins hot beats. On stage, a pair of rappers face off, microphones in hand, trading verses of improvised rhyme. They look like typical hip-hop artists, dressed in baggy pants and baseball caps. But listen closely and you notice something unusual: They're performing in Chinese. [27]

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[25] Paul Gilroy, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[26] David, Hesmondhalgh, "Urban Breakbeat Culture: Repercussions of Hip-Hop in the United Kingdom" in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside of the USA*, ed. by Tony Mitchell (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press: 2002), 86-101.

[27] Jeff Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World," *Foreign Policy* 163 (2007): 58-65.

In his piece for *Foreign Policy,* Jeff Chang goes on to note that China has become a hotbed for hip-hop culture in general, along with hip-hop music, a reflection of the dynamism and ever changing landscape of China. Hip-hop in China also reflects the changing relationship between the Chinese people and the at times repressive and over bearing government that still suppresses certain activities and the freedom of artists, most notably those outside the hip-hop sphere such as renowned artist Ai Weiwei, who has been jailed and or put on house arrest multiple times throughout his career. As has already been mentioned, in South Korea, hip-hop culture has found a place amongst the youth who have taken breaking and turned it from an anomaly at best, into an integral component of South Korean popular culture. Japan has seen similar trends with hip-hop dance and clothing styles popularized via manga, anime, and other forms of media.[28]

Hip-hop's popularity in the Far East reflects hip-hop culture's roots in political activism and as a form of non-conformist, non-mainstream expression. While hip-hop dance and music have become increasingly popular among young people in China, Korea, and Japan, hip-hop culture and music still occupies the periphery of cultural norms and acceptance. With high stakes placed on education and examinations, even recreational activities such as music and sports are generally used as a way to bolster a student's overall attractiveness to top tier colleges, or as a way to earn scholarships and ease financial burdens on parents. In South Korea, as in China and Japan, exams are so important for deciding one's prospects for future employment, that on the day of the national college entrance examinations, the entire nation essentially shuts down so that the students taking the exam have as quiet as an environment as possible. There is no traffic, employees are told to come

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[28] Jeff Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World," *Foreign Policy* 163 (2007): 58-65.

to work later in the day, airplanes and airports operate on a modified schedule, and students are escorted to their testing locations via police motorcades. Hip-hop not only gives young people in these countries a chance to let loose, but also serves as a form of protest against the need to conform to a strictly regimented lifestyle where education and cram school determine one's social status and position in a socioeconomic hierarchy. In the case of these countries, hip-hop has did not appeal to a minority group or people, but instead gave voice to a youth population trapped by expectations.[29]

Along with a background that allowed many different groups of people to relate to it, hip-hop's rise was also coincident with the very beginning of modern globalization. It is no surprise that hip-hop grew in popularity in the United States, an extremely large landmass, and the world, thanks to the development of new technologies and forms of transportations. For the first time, it was possible for most people to easily travel the globe via airplane or communicate with people all over the world thanks to a more reliable global telecommunications network. Access to cheap and reliable forms of travel allowed groups like Bambaataa's Universal Zulu Nation to travel all over the world in a form of musical proselytizing where they attempted to convert people who had never heard of hip-hop into their fold. Other groups like Public Enemy were instrumental in appealing to groups of people such as Basque separatists and nationalists in other countries sick of being oppressed by what they felt was discriminatory and incompetent central governments. Faster and more efficient means of international travel allowed these ambassadors of hip-hop culture the opportunity to not only expose diverse groups of people to hip-hop music, but also to the

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[29] Edward Wong, "Tests That Can Determine the Course of Life in China Gets a Closer Examination," *New York Times*, June 30, 2012m Accessed January 4, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/world/asia/burden-of-chinas-college-entrance-test-sets-off-wide-debate.html?pagewanted=all

soul of hip-hop ensconced in the angry and hyper political lyrics of Chuck D of Public Enemy.[30]

Along with more efficient means of transport, the advent of a global telecommunications network, the introduction of the CD, and the rapidly decreasing cost of consumer electronics also contributed to making hip-hop music accessible to people from every socioeconomic background. Broadcast television was able to reach a larger audience than ever before thanks to a more reliable means of broadcast and networks like Music Television, now known as MTV, was able to broadcast to an audience of millions both within and outside the United States. MTV's large reach was instrumental in the dissemination of hip-hop music and culture to a wider global audience. With programs like *Yo! MTV Raps*, MTV made a strong push for the emerging hip-hop market. Radio also influenced the spread of hip-hop. For example, with the creation of several radio stations in 1982, the French population was exposed, for the first time, to hip-hop *en masse*. Anyone with a radio simply who just tuned their radio to the appropriate station were met with the rancorous and rhythmic lyricism of American MCs such as Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, and eventually French hip-hop artists like DJ Dee Nasty, Lionel D, MC Solaar and the abrasive assassin. The availability and mass production of CDs and commercial CD players gave people a completely new way to listen to music – for the first time people could listen to music anywhere. Not only did CDs allow people the freedom to listen to music anywhere they wanted, they also provided record labels and emerging artists with a cheap medium to rapidly distribute their music.[31]

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[30] Jeff Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World," *Foreign Policy* 163 (2007): 62-63.
[31] Chang, "It's a Hip-Hop World," 62-63.

Since hip-hop first made its appearance four decades ago it has grown into an international phenomenon. However, understandably, most hip-hop literature focuses on hip-hop in the United States and uses hip-hop as a mechanism to discuss the racial and political struggles of African Americans and other minority and or immigrant groups. The US-centric bias of much hip-hop literature and analyses makes sense in the context of hip-hop's development and subsequent evolution. Historians focused on hip-hop as an integral component and extension of African American culture or used as an overture for discussions on the current state of African American politics, social situations, and larger issues of race and identity. The recent emergence of hip-hop, not only internationally, but also as a cultural movement, means that scholarship on hip-hop is constrained by time – it is difficult to write a historical work on a phenomenon that is arguably still occurring. As a result, most hip-hop scholarship focuses on the origins of hip-hop and attempts to identify a strong historical lineage for the development of hip-hop based on African American and Afro-Caribbean musical and cultural traditions.[32]

Recently, hip-hop literature has expanded to include perspectives on hip-hop in other countries. Unfortunately many of these analyses tend to be restricted to binary comparisons where hip-hop in another country is compared to hip-hop in the United States, and not in the local context. When analyzing hip-hop in other countries, several factors contribute to the existence of this binary analytical framework. First, hip-hop developed and evolved first in the United States and the United States still represents not only the biggest hip-hop market commercially, but the United States also contains the most widely known and influential hip-hop artists. Second, most historians still approach hip-hop in other countries from an

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[32] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-12.

outside-in perspective and evaluate non-native forms of hip-hop within an analytical

framework that evaluates formations of hip-hop culture based on relationships to African

American and Afro-Caribbean musical traditions.[33]

Hip-hop outsiders often cite Jeff Chang's history of hip-hop, *Can't Stop Won't Stop*

as a primer on hip-hop history and culture. His work offers a provocative and at times

brilliant summary of hip-hop's early history. He intersperses his narrative with interviews

from both pioneers of hip-hop music such as DJ Kool Herc and Afrika Bambaataa, as well

as gang members and activists. However, his work suffers from a lack of focus and a clearly

defined argument and never makes the transition from commentary to analysis. The rapper

KRS One, one of the founding fathers of hip-hop music, offered his take, not just on

Chang's book, but on an entire category of hip-hop literature devoid of historical or

scholastic analysis:

> It wasn't one particular book – it was most of the hip-hop books that I'm reading are
> not dealing with scholarship. They're dealing with the folklore and the mythology of
> hip-hop. They are being politically correct according to what rappers have said hip-
> hop's history is, but they are not doing the full scholarship that it takes to write down
> history or to document any piece of it…But we have journalists posing as scholars
> that are listening to a record and saying "OK, because KRS said in a record that this
> is the history, we're gonna write it in a book" and we need to get away from that.[34]

KRS One criticizes Chang's book and similar works, but he also harshly criticizes what he

believes is the approach of many hip-hop writers who masquerade as historians.[35]

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[33] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-12.

[34] KRS One, interview by Robbie Ettelson, Unkut, http://www.unkut.com/2007/06/krs-one-the-unkut-interview/, June 14, 2007.

[35] KRS One, June 14, 2007.

In contrast to the works produced by Chang and other writers, Tricia Rose's *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* provided the first serious academic foray into the history of hip-hop. Rose offers a multifaceted analysis of the history of hip-hop in the United States and explores the roots of hip-hop in traditional African oral traditions and musical styles and the role of race and politics in the development of hip-hop music and culture. She paints a picture of hip-hop culture and music as a vibrant component of Americana that represents a diverse range of political perspectives and individuals. Despite this diversity, however, it remains clear in both Rose's analysis and subsequent works on hip-hop, that hip-hop remains diverse insofar as it still echoes African American and Afro-Caribbean musical traditions and represents the conditions and suffering of marginalized black minority groups in the United States. Regardless of her narrow scope of focus, Rose's work is important for two reasons: first, it represents one of the first serious scholarly works on hip-hop; second, it helped eliminate any stigmas associated with hip-hop as a scholarly subject.[36]

The volume of hip-hop scholarship exploded in the late 1990s up until the present day. However, most modern hip-hop scholarship has moved away from the notion that hip-hop represents contemporary American culture and adopted the viewpoint that hip-hop as a cultural movement failed to improve or change the situation of African Americans. These scholars modified the analyses originally deployed by Rose and chosen to categorize hip-hop as the failed successor to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. In the cultural and social vacuum created by the end of the Civil Rights movement, hip-hop and its early political nature was supposed to continue to move toward improving the condition of

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[36] Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

African Americans in the urban ghettos of the United States. Unfortunately, the popularity

of hip-hop not only piqued the interest of major record labels, but also people who grew up

outside of the communities where hip-hop was first introduced and developed. Scholars such

as M.K. Asante believe the influence of outside parties led to the commodification and

subsequent bastardization of a cultural and musical movement inspired by politics into a

consumer good that glamourized gang culture and objectified women.[37] For example, Snoop

Dogg and Lil' Wayne, two of the most popular rappers in the United States have songs filled

with lyrics that refer to women as hos, sluts, and bitches, while also glamorizing the

recreational use of drugs and gang culture.[38] [39]

The commodification of hip-hop and the analysis of the commercialization and

appropriation of black culture comprise the bulk of modern hip-hop scholarship. While most

scholars agree that hip-hop has failed to live up to the legacy of previous black

empowerment movements, let alone continue the work of the Civil Rights Movement, there

is much disagreement about *how* hip-hop failed, the extent it failed, and if hip-hop

represented a true path toward success at all. Additionally, the commodification of hip-hop

and commercialization of hip-hop culture and music allowed it to be easily exported to other

countries. The appearance of hip-hop variants all over the world spawned another form of

historical inquiry that sought to evaluate these permutations of American hip-hop in the

context of African American and Afro-Caribbean musical traditions. However, most of the

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[37] M.K. Asante, *It's Bigger than Hip-Hop: The Rise of the Post Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).
[38] Lil' Wayne, *Tha Carter II*, Universal, CD, December 6, 2005.
[39] Snoop Dogg, *Snoopified: The Best of Snoop Dogg*, Priority/EMI Records, CD, September 25, 2008.

scholarly work on international variants of hip-hop lies in fields outside history –

ethnolinguistics, African American Culture, musicology, among others.[40]

My thesis analyzes hip-hop in South Africa and evaluates the acceptance of various

hip-hop groups in the context of their local hip-hop environment. South Africa's struggles

with Apartheid and racial tension mirror America's own struggles with racial integration and

both countries possess similar histories of protracted and pronounced racial discrimination

toward minority groups. In South Africa, before the end of apartheid, a white minority

successfully marginalized the majority black population and discriminated heavily against

them. While black South Africans represented the majority of the population, racist

legislation enacted by the ruling National Party and a system of segregation called apartheid

allowed the minority Afrikaner population to control the government. Therefore, South

Africa proved fertile ground for hip-hop and represents a perfect case study for the

evaluation of hip-hop as a cultural phenomenon and how hip-hop culture and music can

develop outside of the United States. My thesis will use hip-hop in South Africa as a case

study for the evaluation of hip-hop outside the United States and analyze the factors that

affected the acceptance of different hip-hop groups within a local context before and after

the end of apartheid.

First, my thesis will examine the emergence and development of hip-hop in the Cape

Flats region of South Africa prior to Apartheid and hip-hop's place in the lives of black

South Africans before and after Apartheid. In particular, my thesis will examine the

development of hip-hop in the context of hip-hop's development in the United States. I will

try to answer whether or not hip-hop in South Africa represents authentic hip-hop and

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[40] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-12.

examine both the indigenous and exogenous cultural and musical influences that affected it during its development. I will also examine translations of lyrics produced by different and prominent South African artists in order to determine if there is any sort of similarity between the language used by South African hip-hop artists and American hip-hop artists. Second, I will examine hip-hop after Apartheid, and whether or not hip-hop was utilized by the Afrikaner population to cope with their new status as both the political and social minority in South Africa. I will focus my discussion on the popular South African rap duo Die Antwoord and contrast them to both black South African artists and American hip-hop artists.

Unlike many international phenomena, which, generally, first spread nationally and then spread globally, hip-hop almost simultaneously grew in popularity in both the United States and also other countries. The rapid export of hip-hop music and culture inevitably led to a backlash back in the American communities that originally developed hip-hop, which viewed hip-hop outside the United States as unauthentic. Consequently, notions of authenticity and the evaluation of authentic hip-hop are a pervasive part of both scholastic and journalistic literature on hip-hop. Furthermore, the majority of work that exists on hip-hop, both in the United States and abroad, operates within the context of an African American bias.[41] While scholars such as Paul Gilroy have attempted to deconstruct American hip-hop with the potential to expand the scholarly analysis of hip-hop to a more global perspective, few efforts have been made at comprehensive analyses of global hip-hop culture and appropriation.[42]

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[41] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 3.

[42] Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the* USA, 3

Hip-hop scholarship in the United States has inseparably tied hip-hop culture and music to notions of African American identity. Scholars such as Russell A. Potter have restricted the analysis of hip-hop from derivations of American hip-hop that have developed all over the world because they lack explicit connections to African American identity. One of the staunchest supporters of the notion that hip-hop is strictly an African American cultural and musical form, Potter misuses arguments and analyses offered by scholars such as Gilroy to support the narrow and exclusivist views of hip-hop. As Tony Mitchell explains:

> Predicating his entire argument on a misappropriation of Gilroy's concept of a "populist modernist" black Atlantic diasporic vernacular into what he calls the "resistance postmodernism" of African American hip-hop, Potter's insistence on the authenticity of the "African American homespun" origins of hip-hop sounds like a parochial attempt to deny its appropriateness to other localities outside the USA.[43]

In the context of African American history, unwillingness to accept non-African American hip-hop makes a certain level of sense due to a long history of cultural and musical theft. However, Tricia Rose, arguably the first scholar to critically analyze hip-hop and hip-hop culture from an academic perspective described her desire for future works to explore and expand on global forms of hip-hop. Tony Mitchell in his work, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA,* compiles the first collection of works designed to critically analyze different variations of hip-hop all over the world in what he describes as his effort to fill the void of scholarship mentioned by Rose.[44]

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[43] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 5.
[44] Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the* USA, 5.

Via an analysis of both examples of hip-hop in South Africa, my thesis demonstrates that hip-hop is no longer a strict extension of African American and Afro-Caribbean musical norms, but rather a global and diverse movement where acceptance is derived from how well hip-hop reflects the local environment in which it exists. Furthermore, I suggest that hip-hop cannot be interpreted within a static framework. In the context of globalization and increased diversification, hip-hop no longer represents a strictly political art form and consequently hip-hop does not need to be overtly political. Instead, the degree to which hip-hop represents and exemplifies its local environment determines the degree of its authenticity. The rest my thesis examines hip-hop in South Africa in two specific cases. The first chapter explores the origins of hip-hop in South Africa and its development in the Cape Flats region of Cape Town amongst the Coloured population before apartheid. The second chapter explores the spread of hip-hop from the Coloured community in the Flats and its appropriation by the minority white population after the end of apartheid. Ultimately, my thesis evaluates whether white hip-hop artists and groups can be accepted in South Africa given a long history of racial tension and oppression.

CHAPTER TWO: HIP-HOP IN SOUTH AFRICA, PART I

A variety of factors contributed to hip-hop's successful integration into the Cape Flats community of South Africa. The racial make up of South Africa and its colonial and racially divided history played a large role in the ability of hip-hop to take root in certain South African communities, such as the Cape Flats. Like the United States, South Africa emerged from a colonial period defined by systemic racism, slavery, subjugation of minority populations, and the exploitation of migrant workers for labor. Furthermore, the racial tensions and divisions that persist in South Africa stem from the repression of non-white individuals during a period of segregation and racial marginalization under the National Party's policy of Apartheid. Under Apartheid, the South African government limited the rights of "Coloured" individuals, people of mixed racial heritage or who were non-native African, and completely eliminated the rights of black South Africans vis-à-vis the creation of several semi-autonomous regions where black Africans were officially separated based on tribal heritage, but in practice were separated arbitrarily.[1] [2]

Unlike native or black Africans who lived in the semi-autonomous *bantustans*, coloured South Africans were segregated into regions like the Cape Flats residential area on the outskirts of Cape Town proper. With limited rights and no political representation, the people who lived in the Cape Flats identified with the lyrics, the imagery, and the rhythms of hip-hop culture and music imported from the United States. Like their counterparts in the United States, members of South Africa's first hip-hop community drew from personal

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[1] Michael Gallagher, "The Birth and Death of Apartheid," *BBC News World Edition*, June 17, 2002, accessed January 15, 2013.
[2] "Apartheid," History, accessed February 20, 2013, http://www.history.com/topics/apartheid.

experiences, their dissatisfaction with their sociopolitical situation, and both institutionalized

racism as well as cultural racism. A quote collected by Remi Warner in *Native Tongues: An*

African Hip-Hop Reader sums up the connections between South African youth in Cape

Town and other members of the trans-Atlantic African diaspora:

> I'm a product of a port city, Cape Town, New Orleans, Rio, Barbados, New York. We have much in common with each other because we are bound by the Atlantic and all that happened on that ocean whether it was slave-trade or commerce or whatever and our rhythms and our language and our so-called culture is more outward looking.[3]

Essentially, along with their similar sociopolitical situations to African Americans, coloured

youth in Cape Town shared similar a similar ancestral history to their counterparts in

America and in the South Bronx.[4] [5]

Cultural, historical, and sociopolitical similarities between the Cape Flats coloured

communities and the African American communities in the United States, as well as all over

the Caribbean, combined with the geography and the local political situation in South

Africa, facilitated the rapid adoption and assimilation of hip-hop into the local South African

culture of Cape Town. However, the coloured people in the Cape Flats received rights and

benefits denied to the black South Africans cordoned off in the various *bantustans* set up by

the South African government. Under the guise of setting up more homogenous regions

where "ethnic" or "tribal" conflict could be avoided, these black South Africans had little

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[3] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 117.

[4] Merle Lipton, "The South African Census and the Bantustan Policy," *The World Today* 28 (1972): 257-271.

[5] Bertil Egerö, *South Africa's Bantustans: From Dumping Grounds to Battlefronts* (Sweden: Motala Grafiska, 1991).

access to basic necessities and utilities. Therefore, access to radio, television, and a close

proximity to the privileged white population of South Africa – the *Afrikaners* – afforded

coloured youth with the exposure and access to American hip-hop music and culture.[6]

The privileged position of Coloured South Africans in Cape Town compared to the

black South Africans relegated to the *bantustans* created real, geographic divisions in South

Africa's musical and cultural landscape. Unlike the binary segregation that persisted in the

United States following the end of the Civil War, a tripartite system of segregation divided

white, black, and Coloured South Africans along racial and, thanks to the creation of

bantustans, geographic lines. The history of Coloured people further complicated their

relationship to other South Africans and also provided them a connection to the people

responsible for producing hip-hop music a world away in the South Bronx. Descended from

slaves brought to South Africa during Dutch colonial rule, many Coloured South Africans

felt an attraction to hip-hop because it provided a mechanism to construct a sense of self and

a cultural identity.[7] Like the Coloured people who first came to consume, adopt, and

eventually make it their own, hip-hop in South Africa, at first, lacked a clear-cut identity due

to its duplicitous existence as both a reflection of American hip-hop culture and its adoption

into South African culture.

From 1948 to 1994 the National Party of South Africa enforced a system of racial

segregation designed to protect and empower the white political elite. A vestigial remnant of

Dutch and British colonial rule in the region, apartheid developed into a full-blown and

strictly enforced government policy where people were segregated into different residential

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[6] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in
Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa
World Press, 2011), 105-144.
[7] Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 105-144.

areas based on their race. After World War II, the National Party began its long rule of

South Africa and apartheid eventually caused the complete abolition of non-white political

representation in South Africa in 1970 – ten years after South Africa became an independent

republic supposedly free from colonial influence. The systematic and brutal racism

employed by the South African government to maintain their rule contained similarities to

the practices employed in the United States during and immediately after segregation.[8][9]

Consequently, in South Africa, hip-hop found a receptive audience in a country

divided along racial lines with a system of government sanctioned racism that echoed the

policies of segregation and racial discrimination that contributed to the social and economic

repression of a generation of African Americans in the United States. Like African

Americans in the United States, black and mixed South Africans enjoyed few rights and

even less political representation in Apartheid era South Africa. Also, like the black

population in America, Africans in South Africa represented a diverse mixture of cultures

and backgrounds. The discovery of gold in Johannesburg in the 19th century and the

subsequent mass immigration of African workers to South Africa, meant that by the time the

National Party and Apartheid succeeded colonial rule, South Africa was home to a diverse

mixture of Africans from all over the continent.[10]

One aspect of apartheid involved the government sequestration of non-whites in the

Cape Flats region, on the outskirts of Cape Town, under the 1950 Population Registration

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[8] Michael Gallagher, "The Birth and Death of Apartheid," *BBC News World Edition*, June 17, 2002, accessed January 15, 2013.

[9] "Apartheid," History, accessed February 20, 2013, http://www.history.com/topics/apartheid

[10] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 118-122.

Act.[11][12] Simply "the Flats" to locals, hip-hop found its first home in South Africa here, a melting pot for a diverse mixture of different African tribes descended from the migrant workers originally attracted by the discovery of gold, as well as slaves brought over during South Africa's long history as a colonial asset. While the government only required "Coloureds", defined as people of mixed racial heritage and non-native Africans, to live in the Cape Flats they, in reality, restricted all non-whites, who did not live in the government sanctioned *bantustans*, into this residential area on the outskirts of Cape Town.[13] Roughly two decades after the end of segregation in the United States, hip-hop found its way to a South Africa where the majority of the population lived in government sanctioned residential areas and major portions of the population inhabited government sponsored semi-autonomous states where Africans from various tribes lived without any rights whatsoever.

Hip-hop's influence on South Africa during and after apartheid, while significant, does not represent the first instance of cultural exchange between black Africans in South Africa and the African diaspora found throughout the Caribbean and the Americas. South Africa's long colonial history contains plenty of evidence for the cross Atlantic dispersal of African American musical and cultural forms. Before the arrival of hip-hop in South Africa, jazz demanded a large following in South Africa among all the different and disparate racial and ethnic groups. [14][15] However, hip-hop exerted a greater influence on South Africa's

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[11] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 106.

[12] Parliament of South Africa, *Population Registration Act,* Cape Town, South Africa, 1950.

[13] Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 106.

[14] Christopher Ballantine, "Music and Emancipation: The Social Role of Black Jazz and Vaudeville in South Africa between the 1920s and the Early 1940s," Journal of Southern African Studies 17 (1991): 129-152.

cultural and musical development during and after apartheid than any previously imported cultural phenomenon – at least amongst the youth. As Shaheen Ariefdien of Prophets of Da City stated, hip-hop culture and music provided kids without any material possessions and or wealth the ability to strike back against "the man."[16] It also inspired disparate groups of youths in South Africa to action against the repressive National Party, which dominated South African politics from 1948-1994, and gave them a means to protest their situation, their repression, and the injustice they experienced as a natural part of their lives as non-white South Africans.

Mounting pressure and criticism from other countries isolated South Africa during the last two decades of the National Party's rule. Apartheid, while still an integral component of the South African government until the establishment of a new ruling party in South Africa in 1994, saw similar government sanctioned institutions of racial segregation end with the end of segregation in the United States in 1965. From that point forward, South Africa existed as an island of racial segregation and government sanctioned racism while the rest of the former colonial empires and colonies moved toward the realization of more integrated societies and the end of discriminatory domestic policies. Ironically, one of the most vocal critics of South African Apartheid was England, one of the former colonial rulers

[15] Jeff Chang, *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2007).

[16] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.

of South Africa. South Africa's refusal to acquiesce on their stance eventually led to the suspension of trade and cultural exchange between it and England.[17]

South African hip-hop got its start when the white government attempted to use media to curtail and combat increasing radicalism and anger in marginalized black residential areas. Long restricted media forms such as television and radio suddenly became available and for the first time and South Africans were exposed to the music and culture of American hip-hop. The initial intention of the government to use the media as a form of control backfired spectacularly and resulted in the rise of a youth movement that challenged the authority and repressive policies of the ruling National Party. A component of the growing movement to end Apartheid, South African hip-hop helped a generation of young men and women find a voice.[18]

South Africa's isolation from European nations such as England opened the window for American companies and broadcast networks to tap into the reclusive and tightly controlled South African media network. For much of its reign, the National Party and the South African government restricted access to both television and radio broadcasts, especially from the United States, out of fear that certain telecasts and radio shows could subvert the authority of the government and create discord amongst the political minorities. Allowing broadcasts directly aimed at black populations in South Africa reflected a shift in

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[17] "Apartheid," History, accessed February 20, 2013, http://www.history.com/topics/apartheid.

[18] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 110-116.

the overall political structure of South Africa and the priorities of a less conservative government more concerned with economic success than racial purity.[19]

Spearheaded by the mercurial P.W. Botha and the less conservative, and distinctly British, contingent of South African politics, the loosening of media restrictions and censorship sought to quell an increasingly vocal and radical black South African population. Angered by both their sociopolitical status as second-class citizens, the non-white population of South Africa also suffered from a stagnant economy and a lack of opportunities. Botha's government developed a "Total Strategy" to oversee the rise of a black skilled labor force to work in white only areas of South Africa. His government's goal was to utilize black South Africans to supplement the economic needs of South Africa's white population, while simultaneously creating a contingent of skilled black laborers and technicians as allies against a radicalized black population.[20]

While Botha's government wanted to use American television programs to give examples of black middle and upper-class mobility to the non-white populations of South Africa, they also exposed black and non-white South Africans to hip-hop for the first time. American hip-hop music and culture reached the ears and eyes of South Africa's first hip-hop artists and activists, such as Prophets of Da City (POC) and Godessa, via state approved radio stations and television broadcasts. Artists such as Public Enemy and Run DMC inspired the first generation of South African hip-hop artists who plied their craft in the Flats and helped develop a distinctly South African hip-hop musical and cultural form.[21]

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[19] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 105-116.
[20] Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 112-114.
[21] Ibid., 105-144.

Along with radio and television, which dispersed American hip-hop music and culture all over South Africa, Cape Town's historical role as a crossroads for East and West, due to its position as a major port for South Africa, meant, even during apartheid Cape Town was a cosmopolitan city with a wide variety of cultures and influences. The transnational connections that existed in Cape Town thanks to its geographic position and traditional role as an interface for a variety of different cultures provided the necessary conditions for it to serve as the first stop in hip-hop's spread across South Africa. Furthermore, coloured people who lived in the Flats, had access to at least some modern conveniences such as television sets and electricity, which the South African government provided to them. This gave them an advantage compared to many of the non-white and non-mixed South Africans, who did not have access to the same resources.[22]

Hip-hop did not resonate immediately with black South Africans or people who identified as black in South Africa. Instead, the coloured people who lived in the Flats were the first drawn to hip-hop and the identity it offered them. Neither black, nor white, these youths flocked to hip-hop, not only because it gave them a voice and an identity, but also because the Coloured youth of South Africa shared a similar ancestral history as the black Americans that invented hip-hop. Unlike other non-white South Africans who were of pure African heritage or who identified as black, coloured people did not live in the semi-autonomous *bantustans,* where the South African government separated different black communities based on heritage. Often, people were separated into these regions arbitrarily,

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[22] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 116-117.

and a lack of opportunities and economic development doomed many of the people in these regions to poverty.[23]

While the situation of coloured individuals in South Africa was hardly any better, they at least lived in areas of South Africa, such as Cape Flats, where the government provided utilities and access to "personal luxury items" such as television sets and radios. Access to radio and television sets provided an enormous advantage to the Cape Flats youth when it came to hip-hop. Rappers such as Shaheen Ariefdien of Prophets of Da City (POC) were exposed to hip-hop for the first time during a broadcast that mixed top ten international hits with indigenous South African music. The song, "Rapper's Delight" by the Sugarhill Gang, by Shaheen's own admission, had a tremendous influence on the direction of his life and his career in hip-hop.[24]

Geography and technology provided coloured South Africans with the real world tools necessary for the successful dispersal of hip-hop culture and music, but their ancestry also provided them with the sort of experiences and historical circumstances to identify with hip-hop. The lyrics of American hip-hop artists such as NWA and Public Enemy spoke to a generation of coloured youth dissatisfied with their social and political statuses, as the rapper Sky 189 states:

> We [Cape Flats youth] could identify with the things that people were saying in the rap songs more than anywhere else [in South Africa] because that was the Bronx of

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[23] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.

[24] Ready D and Shaheen, *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003.

South Africa at the time, I reckon…The identity was bigger….so that's why they could identify with it. Their struggles were the same. [25]

In fact, not only did Coloured youth of the Flats suffer through similar problems of systematic discrimination and a lack of opportunities as their counterparts in the United States, they also shared a common lineage. Similar to how most African Americans were descended from slaves, most coloured South Africans descend from slaves brought to South Africa between the 17th to 19th centuries during the period of time it was under Dutch and British colonial rule. Essentially, the first people to identify with hip-hop in South Africa shared a similar ancestral history to the American hip-hop progenitors.[26]

One of the most important contributing factors to the dispersal and assimilation of hip-hop in Cape Town was the fact that residents of the Flats also lived in close proximity to white populations. While South Africans in Cape Town had sporadic and infrequent exposure to hip-hop music via the radio and television, the spread of hip-hop music and culture in Cape Town relied on the ability of the Afrikaner population to import and or bring back hip-hop music from the United States. Through connections with whites in Cape Town proper, DJs and other musicians in the Flats were able to gain access to hip-hop music from America and elsewhere. These interactions laid the foundation for hip-hop music in South Africa and helped spread the gospel of the church of American hip-hop. South Africa's poor economy and other economic troubles, such as other countries refusing to trade with South Africa due to Apartheid, priced imports out of the reach of people in the Flats. This included

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[25] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 104.
[26] Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 118.

hip-hop music and forced the development of an underground "hip-hop exchange".[27] In one

of the few academic analyses that exist on South African hip-hop, Remi Warner constructs

an astute analysis of the different geographic and cultural factors that led to the successful

adoption of hip-hop by coloured youth in the Flats. In interviews he conducted with a

variety of different artists, he demonstrates that early artists felt an almost inexplicable

connection to hip-hop. As DJ Rozzano recounts: "The thing is, there's a connection man.

You know what I'm saying. There's a connection. There's an identity that we're feeling." [28]

The sentiment that there was a connection between coloured youth and hip-hop music

echoes earlier arguments about the sort of historical and cultural similarities that exist

between South African coloured youth and African American communities in the South

Bronx and similar parts of the Unite States.

Furthermore, Warner expands on the argument that hip-hop music and culture

resonated with the coloured community of South Africa because of their lack of identity in

South Africa's multiracial and multi ethnic environment. He explains:

> …Those distinguished as 'Coloured' over the course of the 20th century acquired differing degrees of self-consciousness as a 'group' with a unique history and collective experience of its own. It is in no small part the historical imbrication of 'Coloured' identity in colonial and apartheid discourses and strategies of divide and rule that made hip-hop such a resonant resource for the making and remaking of Coloured youth identities…[29]

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[27] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 105-144.
[28] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 106.
[29] Ibid., 119.

Since coloured people were not only racially distinct from both the black South African population and the white Afrikaners, but also physically separated from black and white South Africans, their identity as a community was a mixture of state influenced definition and a more fluid attempt on the part of coloured people to define themselves. Consequently Coloured people's cultural state of limbo and lack of a strong attachment to any distinct identity and or heritage allowed them to more readily adopt hip-hop compared to black and white South Africans.

The belief that Coloured people lacked a concrete sense of identity and therefore found something to attach to in hip-hop is a consistent theme in academic literature on Coloured identity and hip-hop in South Africa. As Lee Watkins states, "[f]or hip-hoppers who identify themselves as coloured, hip-hop is a culture that fills the void left by the absence of a 'culture'."[30] The argument that hip-hop simply filled a void for Coloured South Africans seems flawed, but it is a sentiment echoed by coloured members of the South African hip-hop community. For example, in his study of South African hip-hop, Warner recounts the perspectives of two hip-hoppers, b-boy Bernard and DJ Hamma, who share the sentiments expressed by Lee Watkins and other academics:

> White people were always in the process of achieving, looking within themselves and then achieving more. And Black people were always in the process of just freeing themselves. So Coloured people had more time on their hands, that's why we got hold of this [hip-hop] shit first. Just because that time the system made us to be like people that's not really that busy.[31]

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[30] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 122.

[31] Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 123.

However, as Warner continues that the sentiments of Watkins, as well as Bernard and Hamma, discredit the active role played by coloured people in various oppositional movements during the 1980s and unjustly implies that coloured people occupied a less active position in various anti-Apartheid movements.

The system of segregation instituted by the National Party and the South African government, however, separated Coloured people from black and white South Africans both legally and spatially. While Coloured was at one point a term used to refer to all non-white people in South Africa, the South African government in 1905 revamped the definition to only include those people of mixed heritage and thereby create divisions within the non-white population. As Warner notes, as time went on and the National Party took over South Africa, more divisions between coloured South Africans and other non-white South Africans were created:

> The apartheid government would come to entrench and institutionalize this divide and rule strategy ever more firmly upon coming to power in the 1950s, most divisively through the promulgation and implementation of the Group Areas Act (1950) and Coloured Labour Preference Party (1955). Whereas the former uprooted and relocated Blacks and Coloureds from mixed urban neighborhoods into separate townships on the less desirable more removed Cape Flats, the latter legally institutionalizing the preferential hiring of Coloured laborers over Black…[32]

The legal and spatial separation of coloured and black South Africans contributed to Coloured people's sense that they lacked an identity. As the 20th century went on, the definition of "coloured" in South Africa continued to change and, as Warner puts it, "Those

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[32] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 118-119.

distinguished as 'Coloured' over the course of the 20th century acquired differing degrees of self-consciousness as a 'group' with a unique history and collective experience of its own.[33]

The Flats became a refuge for young South Africans with an interest in hip-hop music and culture. Even after the end of apartheid in 1993, South Africans struggled with a legacy of apartheid and racial discrimination. Music, and hip-hop in particular, served as a bridge for cultural and racial reconciliation. Hip-hop was beginning to undo the careful work of decades of racial segregation and division perpetrated by the National Party. Even during the 80s, as hip-hop spread from the United States to South Africa, the culture of b-boying, emceeing, and sampling helped bring the white people from the suburbs of Cape Town to the Flats where Ready D and Shaheen Ariefdien performed as the duo Prophets of Da City. As Ready D describes in an interview with the Red Bull Music Academy, "For some reason the white kids were into b-boying as well," and would come into the Flats with the intention of competing and "hanging out" with the non-whites of Cape Town.[34]

Ready D and Shaheen Ariefdien first experienced hip-hop and hip-hop culture under the yoke of apartheid, in the Flats. When the duo discovered hip-hop, they immersed themselves in a culture of beats, sampling, breakdancing, and rap. Ready D and Shaheen Ariefdien lived and operated in the Cape Flats area of Cape Town, a region designated for occupation and habitation by non-whites commonly referred to simply as the "flats". Ready D explains that they were, "only operating or traveling in the Cape Flats because you

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[33] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 119.

[34] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.

couldn't travel over to other areas just across the road." Despite the repressive and discriminatory actions of the South African government, Ready D and Shaheen describe their early years with a mixture of frankness and humor. They, and everyone else in the Flats, lived at the epicenter of hip-hop music in South Africa. "Hip-hop was pretty much out in the streets," and existed outside mainstream musical culture in South Africa.[35]

In the Flats Ready D and Shaheen Ariefdien congregated with other "crews" to have b-boy battles and while music and hip-hop allowed whites and "coloureds" the opportunity to mingle in an environment of apartheid, b-boy battles also gave Ready D, Shaheen Ariefdien, and other people from the Flats an opportunity to get back at the people who represented the establishment. Ready D explains:

> It was a good opportunity for us to sort of take out the white kid, you know just to get in there and show them, 'You know you fucking us over in one way, we gonna take you out with a windmill or a headspun or some shit like that.' So it was certainly great, but it became very, very personal.[36]

For Ready D, Shaheen, and others in the Flats, these white kids who rode into b-boy battles with sponsorships, money, and the latest fashions embodied the very government that forced non-whites into the Flats and into positions as second-class citizens. Therefore, the opportunity to battle them in their town meant a very rare opportunity to "get back" at the white population without fear of repercussion from police or other law enforcement agencies. At the same time, when Ready D and Shaheen began b-boying at punk rock club Teasers, they state that, "It was the only club, the only movements, and the only

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[35] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.
[36] Ready D and Shaheen, *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003.

scenes…that actually brought young black and white kids together." So while hip-hop, specifically b-boying, allowed the residents of the Flats a chance to "get back" at white South Africans, it also presented one of the only avenues for socialization and interaction for young South Africans of all races.

Like the African American emcees they drew inspiration from, such as Public Enemy, Prophets of Da City rapped about political and social issues unique to their community, their city of Cape Town, and their country. Unfortunately, other similarities with American hip-hop artists meant a tenuous and fractious relationship with the South African government and censorship agencies, which were less than pleased with some of the content of their songs. The South African Broadcasting banned one of their songs, "Understand Where I'm Coming From", until 1997, four years after its release. In "Understand Where I'm Coming From", Ready D and Shaheen state that, "The song is about empowering yourself as an individual and moving forward as a community. [The banning] indicates how backward mental states are. SABC is trying to hide information from people." [37] In apartheid South Africa, hip-hop simultaneously provided an avenue for racial reconciliation and at the same time provided a medium to protest an unjust government.

As hip-hop grew in popularity in South Africa, and especially in Cape Town, young white kids from Cape Town proper brought more music and other goods from the United States to the Flats. It was in the Flats that the first South African hip-hop DJs, MCs, breakers, and graffiti artists found a home and a space to perform, speak out, and assemble.

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[37] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.

Various parts of the Flats became famous for attracting hip-hop artists who practiced and performed at local venues such as *THE BASE*, the club where Shaheen Ariefdien gained notoriety as a freestyler and rap battler, before he garnered acclaim as part of POC. The Flats turned into the first home for hip-hop and the first production center of indigenous hip-hop music and culture in South Africa. In their attempt to disenfranchise and restrict the coloured community of Cape Town, the government created a space where hip-hop and other forms of musical and cultural expression could flourish.[38]

The success of hip-hop in South Africa challenges the paradigms of hip-hop analysis advocated by scholars such as Russell A. Potter, who restrict the examination of hip-hop to the United States and the African American communities responsible for its original conception. In interviews with the Red Bull Music Academy, Shaheen Ariefdien, of Prophets of Da City, describes the conditions and the environment of the Flats that nurtured early attempts at hip-hop music and culture in South Africa. For him, and for many other members of this first generation of South African hip-hop musicians, breakers, graffiti artists, and DJs, hip-hop provided them not only with a means of escape from their lives, but also provided a vehicle to speak out against an oppressive and racist government.[39]

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[38] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.

[39] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-38.

CHAPTER THREE: HIP-HOP IN SOUTH AFRICA, PART II

This chapter examines controversial music duo Die Antwoord in the frame of a new, post-apartheid South Africa and through an analysis of both interviews conducted with Die Antwoord, as well as the lyrical content of their songs, seeks to draw an assessment of their authenticity. Die Antwoord consists of two rappers: Waddy Jones, AKA Ninja and Anri du Toit, known better by her stage name of Yo-Landi Vi$$er. Both plied their trade in the Flats for over a decade, before they took the world by storm and garnered international fame and celebrity. While they have only been active since 2007, they command an international audience with fans all over the world and their music videos have millions of views on YouTube. However, their success abroad has not been matched at home and they are a consistent target of criticism from hip-hop artists and musicians in their native South Africa who view their brand of hip-hop as nothing but a fabricated attempt to make money.[1] [2]

African Americans and Coloured South Africans share similar histories of slavery, sociopolitical repression, and segregation.[3] These similarities helped facilitate the rapid diffusion of hip-hop culture and music from the United States to the Cape Flats, and eventually the rest of South Africa. In the United States, hip-hop successfully traversed racial and economic backgrounds to develop into a cultural phenomenon popular among Americans of all races, creeds, and sociopolitical backgrounds. Similarly, in South Africa,

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[1] Eve Fairbanks, "Johannesburg's Most Wanted." *The New York Times,* January 26, 2012, accessed December 20, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/29/magazine/die-antwoord.html?_r=0.

[2] Jaimie Hodgson, "Die Antwoord And 'Zef' - South Africa's Biggest Non-Existent Scene." *NME,* February 9, 2010, accessed January 16, 2013, http://www.nme.com/blogs/nme-radar/die-antwoord-and-zef-south-africas-biggest-non-existent-scene.

[3] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 105-144.

hip-hop transcended racial and political boundaries and eventually garnered a following among both the native black South Africans and also white Afrikaners. As hip-hop grew in popularity in South Africa, it evolved and many derivations and permutations sprang up throughout South Africa influenced by a myriad of cultural and regional influences.

Coloured South Africans' appropriation of hip-hop music and culture represented a case where hip-hop was successfully transmitted between similar peoples and cultures that possessed a history of cross-cultural exchange.[4] Like the examples where minority and immigrant populations appropriated hip-hop music and culture in France and by England, South African hip-hop first found roots with people that identified with the messages and modus operandi of the American hip-hop DJs, MCs, graffiti artists, and breakers. The culture of protest and expression, which inspired and defined hip-hop's early years in Harlem, resonated with the pan-African diaspora scattered throughout France and England, and with the Coloured people of South Africa. For example, individuals such as Shaheen Ariefdien of Prophets of Da City, identified with the lyrics of American rappers such as NWA and Public Enemy.

Initially, the political realities of apartheid, complex issues of identity and cultural heritage, and racial tensions between South Africa's disparate ethnic and racial groups prevented the widespread popularity of hip-hop. Apartheid prevented Coloured South Africans from leaving the Cape Flats, but eventually as hip-hop became more popular, white South Africans migrated into the Cape Flats because it served as a hotbed for hip-hop culture. Music and other aspects of hip-hop culture, such as breaking, provided a common

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[4] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 105-144.

denominator and integrated youth from completely different backgrounds.[5] In addition to geopolitical restraints, strong cultural identity also prevented the initial spread of hip-hop to black and white South Africans. Black and white South Africans possessed stronger connections to their own musical art forms and cultures and consequently hip-hop was less appealing to them.[6] Today, hip-hop artists and musicians from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds constitute a diverse musical and cultural hip-hop landscape.

The spread of hip-hop to black or minority groups in South Africa, and other countries, represent what can be called "traditional" examples of hip-hop appropriation, where hip-hop spreads laterally to populations that share at least some cultural or racial history with African Americans. For example, both African Americans and Coloured South Africans possess ancestors who were slaves and who were forcibly deposited in a new and unfamiliar environment.[7] Furthermore, even after they gained freedom, African Americans and Coloured South Africans suffered under a repressive and racist government. Most hip-hop narratives, academic or otherwise, focus on these "traditional" examples of hip-hop expansion. Generally, these examples are approached from two perspectives: either the appropriation of hip-hop by other African minority groups is examined as an example of

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[5] Ready D and Shaheen, "Hip-hop and politics all up in the mix with two South African b-boys who know their stuff," *Red Bull Music Academy*, 2003, http://www.redbullmusicacademy.com/lectures/ready-d-and-shaheen--cant-stop-the-prophets.

[6] Remi Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions" in *Native Tongues: an African Hip-Hop Reader*, ed. by P. Khalil Saucier (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 105-144.

[7] Warner, "Colouring the Cape Problem Space: A Hip-Hop Identity of Passions," 105-144.

pan-African cultural exchange or the authenticity of hip-hop produced by other African and or minority groups is evaluated.[8] [9]

The appropriation of hip-hop by a white minority group represents a novel case where hip-hop, which is normally associated with black and African culture, is adopted by a white minority in a predominantly black society. In South Africa, white Afrikaners experienced a complete dissolution of their political power after the end of apartheid. While they once possessed political power and authority disproportionate to their population, they became political and social minorities in a country where they constituted a tiny portion of the population. Decades of apartheid and over a hundred years of colonial rule also meant that they faced anger from non-white South Africans in the post-apartheid South Africa. In an ironic role-reversal, white South Africans became an oppressed minority group that faced, and continues to face, discrimination and a lack of opportunities. A position unlike the one faced by African Americans in the South Bronx during hip-hop's nascent years.

After the end of apartheid, Afrikaners found themselves in an unfamiliar situation. No longer the political majority, they occupied the social and political fringes of a nation they once controlled. After the African National Congress (ANC) officially took power in 1994, Afrikaners experienced, by their own admission, a traumatic transition when apartheid ended, a time period when they witnessed the transformation of South Africa into a non-racial society.[10] Afrikaner anxiety about the end of apartheid and the political transition to a new government led to both internal and also external migration of the Afrikaner population.

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[8] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-38.

[9] Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal, *That's the Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004): 69-224.

[10] Ian Evans, "More white South Africans struggle in post-apartheid economy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 14, 2010, accessed January 10, 2013.

The mass movements of white South Africans both internally and externally in South Africa was a very real attempt on the part of white South Africans to find a sense of self in what they viewed was essentially a new country. These migrations manifested, primarily, in three types of population movements.[11]

The first type of migration was a situation where Afrikaners moved en masse to all-white regions of South Africa, such as Orania, where they hoped to insulate and separate themselves from the rest of the country. These regions dedicated for white South Africans allowed Afrikaners to go into a sort of self imposed exile where they were geographically isolated from the rest of South Africa. The second type of migration involved the migration of Afrikaners into gated communities protected by 24-hour surveillance, armed guards, and physical barriers between the community and the outside world, i.e. non-white South Africa. The first two types of migrations within South Africa represent cases where white South Africans still felt a connection and or obligation to a country they considered home, but, from their perspective, a radically different and transformed home. These white South Africans who still felt connected to the country, went on internal migrations that allowed them to maintain some physical connection with the land their ancestry held sway over for so long.

The third type of migration saw the wholesale physical separation of Afrikaners from South Africa and their emigration into various communities around the world. White South Africans found homes in many different Western countries, such as Great Britain, Canada, Ireland, Belgium, Spain, and France, with a large number of white South Africans settling in

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[11] Scott C. Johnson, "Fleeing From South Africa," *The Daily Beast*, February 13, 2009, Accessed January 5, 2013. http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/02/13/fleeing-from-south-africa.html.

the United States. The emigration of white South Africans out of South Africa was stimulated by a combination of fear of the new government and potential social reprisals for decades of apartheid and also the practical need for employment. The Equal Employment Act of 1994 meant that race became a highly important factor in the employability of an individual. Ultimately, all three types of migration, both inside and outside South Africa culminated in the creation of a Afrikaner diaspora connected by common threads of culture, history, and tradition presumably threatened by a new black and non-racial South Africa.

Recently, a rise in the killings of white South African farmers and the socioeconomic reality for the majority of Afrikaners in South Africa has demonstrated that some of the anxiety felt by Afrikaners prior to apartheid was somewhat well founded. After the end of apartheid the economy shifted in favor of black workers who were no longer restricted from certain positions, work, or opportunities due to segregation. As the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) describes:

> It was an improbable sight even 10 years ago in South Africa: white people in shacks –poor, desperate, and surviving off handouts. But with the fall of apartheid and the transformation of the job market in favor of the majority black population, increasing numbers of white people are without work and living below the poverty line. Recent statistics from the Bureau for Market Research show that there are 650,000 whites ages 16 or over without work, with estimates saying that total is growing by 15 percent a year.[12]

Fair or not, the transformation of South Africa from a segregated to non-racial state eliminated many of the government protections afforded to white South Africans. Many of these protections manifested in the form of low level and unskilled positions reserved for white South Africans. As Dirk Hermann, deputy secretary of the Solidarity Union (a

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[12] Ian Evans, "More white South Africans struggle in post-apartheid economy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 14, 2010, accessed January 10, 2013.

political party in South Africa), points out, "Mr. Mbeki's philosophy of a two-nation state – rich whites and poor blacks – hid the problem of poor whites."[13] [14]

In addition to poor economic prospects, white South Africans face the constant threat of reprisal killings and violent deaths where, "…in a country cursed by one of the world's highest murder rates, being a white farmer makes a violent death an even higher risk." [15] A lack of protection and continued prejudiced against white South Africans highlights the tumultuous state of affairs in a country still struggling with race and race relations. Modern South Africa, after apartheid and the rise of black political power, still struggles with race. Barely out of the shadow of decades of apartheid, South Africa has seen what some observers and citizens call a role reversal of apartheid policies. Without the political protections and favor afforded to them under the rule of the National Party, white Afrikaners increasingly find themselves without sustainable work and living in poverty. The rapid reversal in fortunes between non-whites and whites in South Africa may strike some as a form of poetic justice, but it also represents a pervasive and acceptable discrimination that have forced many white South Africans into positions of desperation and economic hopelessness.

Increased crime and continued tensions between white and non-white South Africans define a country struggling to shed a troubling legacy and facing an uncertain future. Anger

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[13] Ian Evans, "More white South Africans struggle in post-apartheid economy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 14, 2010, accessed January 10, 2013.

[14] Kerri Macdonald, "Poverty, and Little Sympathy, in South Africa," *The New York Times,* June 25, 2010, accessed February 20, 2013, http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/25/behind-45/.

[15] Reuters, "Killings of white farmers highlight toxic apartheid legacy in South Africa," November 30, 2012, accessed January 6, 2013, http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/11/30/15571149-killings-of-white-farmers-highlight-toxic-apartheid-legacy-in-south-africa?lite

and fear continue to color a debate about the ethics of apartheid policies and the benefits that

colonialism and subsequent all-white rule had for the majority black population of South

Africa. Some white South Africans, for example, continue to argue that colonialism

benefited black South Africans because it provided structure and technology to an otherwise

"uncivilized" native population.[16] These sorts of controversial arguments color the position

of an increasingly marginalized minority defensive not only of their history, but also fearful

of their current position, as well as their future. Many white South Africans, after apartheid,

feel abandoned by a new government that they believe do not think white South Africans

need or, arguably, deserve help. In the context of this "new" South Africa, Afrikaners have

been forced to adopt a "new normal" and experience hardships and a reality unthinkable in

their parents' generation.

The end of apartheid thrust white South Africans into a position with severely

diminished political influence and fewer economic opportunities. Their country also

changed, and white South Africans came to occupy a country and government suspicious of

both their motives and role in society – essentially the same position occupied by non-whites

for most of South Africa's post-colonial history. The establishment of laws and practices

that favor black and Coloured South Africans have pushed out working class Afrikaners

from jobs with little expectations for help from the government. For some Afrikaners, the

situation is dire:

> "It's apartheid in reverse," says Russel du Toit, a father of five. "We can't get jobs or
> houses because they're given to black people and we're bottom of the list. We don't
> have electricity and we have [water] taps in the street and those toilets," he says,

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[16] David Smith, " 'I benefited from apartheid' T-Shirt sparks South African race row," The
Guardian November 12, 2012, accessed December 27, 2012,
http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/16/benefited-apartheid-tshirt-south-africa.

pointing to temporary latrines. Home for Mr. du Toit and his family is two leaking huts with a campfire to cook food – all he can afford on his $19-a-day pay as a casual maintenance man.[17]

For people such as Russel du Toit and his family, the living conditions for many Afrikaners are less than ideal, even desperate. While white South Africans still occupy many positions of privilege and are paid, on average, six times more than non-whites, many Afrikaners now live in impoverished and increasingly large makeshift communities that resemble some modern, South African version of the Hoovervilles seen in the United States during the Great Depression.[18]

The reversal of the normal racial paradigm in South Africa has seen blacks, normally the repressed group in many multiracial countries, especially countries with a link to the Atlantic Slave Trade and colonialism, take on the dominant sociopolitical role, while whites occupy the fringes and suffer from political, social, and cultural marginalization. Within the context of white Afrikaners experiencing discrimination and marginalization, hip-hop culture and music became increasingly popular among Afrikaners who identified with the spirit, but not necessarily the lyrical content, of African American and Coloured South African hip-hop artists. The popularity of hip-hop amongst white South Africans has inevitably seen the emergence of white South African hip-hop artists who not only challenge the traditional paradigm of hip-hop in South Africa, but the subconscious beliefs that

[17] Ian Evans, "More white South Africans struggle in post-apartheid economy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 14, 2010, accessed January 10, 2013.
[18] Kerstin Poppendieck, "White South Africans move to townships," DW, August 11, 2012, accessed January 17, 2013, http://www.dw.de/white-south-africans-move-to-townships/a-16365582.

constrict the authenticity of hip-hop music and culture to African American or pan-African culture.[19]

The Afrikaner rap duo Die Antwoord challenges both the notion that hip-hop remains a cultural and musical art form restricted to the Cape Flats and its inhabitants, i.e. Coloured South Africans. The criticisms levied against Die Antwoord by members of the South African hip-hop community resemble the same criticisms that hip-hop artists and academics levied against the various iterations of hip-hop that sprang up across the United States. Hip-hop culture and music spread simultaneously both in the United States and abroad and its rapid diffusion caused a backlash among the people who felt responsible for introducing and shaping hip-hop culture and music. In South Africa, the authenticity of hip-hop is often evaluated in the Cape Flats region of Cape Town, where hip-hop first took root in South Africa and was transformed into a musical and cultural form that reflected the local community.

In 1995 a young white Afrikaner ventured into the Cape Flats and embarked on a musical career that would span seven names and take twelve years before he achieved success and international fame. Watkins Tudor Jones, one half of the international rap phenomenon Die Antwoord, has been known by a number of different aliases over his long musical career: Max Normal, The Man Who Never Came Back, MC Totally Rad, Yang Weapon, Waddy, WAD:e, and finally, his most well known moniker, Ninja. A multitalented performer who experimented and performed all over South Africa before he created Die Antwoord, Ninja represents a non-traditional example of hip-hop in South Africa. Along with Yo-Landi Vi$$ser, the other half of Die Antwoord, Ninja's success and relationship

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[19] Tony Mitchell, *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 1-38.

with hip-hop not only challenges notions of authenticity in South Africa, but also challenges the notions of authenticity in the United States.

After the end of apartheid, hip-hop continued to grow in popularity and the success of artists such as Prophets of Da City, led many aspiring young artists into the Cape Flats. Ninja began performing in the Flats and elsewhere in Cape Town, integrating his own character and culture into the fascinating American import of hip-hop.[20] Later, he would form a partnership with emcee Anri du Toit, known better as Yo-Landi Vi$$er, and become the biggest music group in South Africa's history.[21] Their brash and "in your face" brand of hip-hop, which they consider within the genre of "Zef" hip-hop, has garnered fans all over the world. Their YouTube videos contain comments and praise in English, Afrikaans, as well as a multitude of other languages, which only speaks to their international exposure and popularity.[22] [23] [24]

Waddy Jones spent ten years performing and experimenting in the Flats with various forms of hip-hop and rap, looking for his "big break", before he met and began collaborating with Anri du Toit. Together they formed Die Antwoord, or literally, "The Answer".[25] [26] For

[20] Die Antwoord, "Who the Hell Are Die Antwoord?" *Pitchfork*, February 12, 2010, http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/7766-die-antwoord/.
[21] Die Antwoord, Interview by Michael Mann, *Ion Magazine*, July 25, 2010, http://ionmagazine.ca/music/interviews/die-antwoord.
[22] DIE ANTWOORD - BABY'S ON FIRE (OFFICIAL), YouTube video, posted by ZEFRECORDZ, June 5, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcXNPI-IPPM.
[23] 'I FINK YOU FREEKY' by DIE ANTWOORD (Official), YouTube video, posted by ZEFRECORDZ, January 31, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Uee_mcxvrw
[24] Die Antwoord – Enter the Ninja (Explicit Version), YouTube video, posted by DieAntwoordVEVO, August 3, 2010, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cegdR0GiJl4
[25] Die Antwoord, "Who the Hell Are Die Antwoord?" *Pitchfork*, February 12, 2010, http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/7766-die-antwoord/.
[26] Die Antwoord, "Die Antwoord: The Rolling Stone Interview," *Rolling Stone*, January 30, 2012, http://www.rollingstone.co.za/musicrev/item/529-die-antwoord-the-rolling-stone-interview.

ten years Die Antwoord lived in a one room flat in Cape Town, South Africa toiling away at

a musical career neither Ninja nor Yo-Landi Vi$$er knew would be successful. Five years

into their project the two had a child. Ninja describes their frustration with their situation in

the song, "So What?" from their recently released album, *Ten$Ion*:

> Rapped for 20 years, never made a cent/Borrowed money from my mom to pay the
> rent/Now how'm I gonna get out of this mess/Yo- landi shows me two stripes on the
> fucking piss-test/Broke-ass Ninja gonna be a daddy/Little baby Ninja gonna need
> some nappies.[27]

Their financial hardship was partly self-inflicted because South Africa's most popular

musical export refused to be influenced by major record labels. After disputes arose between

Die Antwoord and Interscope about the content of some songs for their next album *Ten$Ion*,

Ninja and Yo-Landi Vi$$er left the label and a multimillion dollar contract deal.[28] At the

same time, the unwillingness of Die Antwoord to compromise their artistic vision in lieu of

a lucrative record contract speaks to their dedication not only to hip-hop music, but also to

how their personal connection to their craft.

The viral spread of two music videos, "Zef Side" and "Enter the Ninja", via the

Internet literally launched Die Antwoord into musical relevance overnight. Both videos have

accrued more than a million hits on popular Internet video site YouTube and the videos

capture both their musical versatility as well as their unique style, which has won them fans

and drawn criticism. In an interview with music media site Pitchfork, Die Antwoord

expressed a mixture of disbelief and incredulity at their rapid rise to fame:

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[27] Die Antwoord, "Die Antwoord: The Rolling Stone Interview," *Rolling Stone*, January 30,
2012, http://www.rollingstone.co.za/musicrev/item/529-die-antwoord-the-rolling-stone-
interview.
[28] Die Antwoord, *Rolling Stone*, January 30, 2012.

We noticed on the 3rd of February. It was a full moon. We just stared at the computer screen. We started getting about 1000 emails per day. When it got to 5000 mails on day five, I just gave up, lay down on the floor and looked at the roof. It was like tripping on acid. But now every time we wake up it still won't go away.[29]

Their massive explosion in fame brought them into contact with a variety of major record labels and eventually they signed with Interscope. Before their falling out, Die Antwoord expressed optimism about their deal with Interscope and in an interview with Ion Magazine, Ninja stated:

That's why we're with Interscope. They don't restrict us at all. Every single fokken major was knocking on our door. We had a real affection with Interscope, like an understanding. We got an intimate understanding and that's really fokken important to us.[30]

However, in the same interview, Ninja states that the worst thing that Interscope can do is "restrict" them and foreshadows the issue that would eventually lead to their falling out. While Die Antwoord faced accusations of inauthenticity early in their careers, their unwillingness to compromise with record labels and their desire to produce music mean they are probably more "real" than some of their critics.

Die Antwoord attracted the attention of all the major record labels because they were unique and represented a new dimension of South African hip-hop distinct to the Flats. They adopted and lived "Zef" culture, which they state, "…is our flavour, our style. It means fucking cool. But even more cool than fucking cool. No one can fuck with your shit. Zef's

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[29] Die Antwoord, "Who the Hell Are Die Antwoord?" *Pitchfork*, February 12, 2010, http://pitchfork.com/features/articles/7766-die-antwoord/.
[30] Die Antwoord, Interview by Michael Mann, *Ion Magazine*, July 25, 2010, http://ionmagazine.ca/music/interviews/die-antwoord.

the ultimate style, basically."[31] Like Zef style, Die Antwoord goes to great lengths to demonstrate they are at the bleeding edge of hip-hop and at the forefront of South African hip-hop culture. Their outrageous clothing, lyricism, and overall attitude defy definition and attempts at categorization. At the same time, their dedication to their musical craft and their hard work also demonstrate a real connection to both hip-hop culture and music. In a country such as South Africa, where different and more popular forms of music exist, it is hard to imagine that Waddy Jones and Anri du Toit would spend nearly two decades trying to find success if they did not possess a "real" dedication to their work.

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[31] Die Antwoord, "Die Antwoord: Zef so Fresh," 2010, http://www.vice.com/read/die-antwoord-154-v16n9.

CONCLUSION

In the United States, hip-hop developed in the South Bronx thanks to a variety of different African American and Afro-Caribbean musical and cultural influences. Spurred by unjust laws and sociopolitical marginalization, the people in the South Bronx channeled their frustrations into the creation of a musical and cultural phenomenon that now commands an audience on every continent and in hundreds of countries. Efforts by hip-hop luminaries such as Afrika Bambaataa, NWA, and Public Enemy to popularize hip-hop abroad through concerts and other forms of consumable media, such as CDs, helped hip-hop spread, almost at the same time, globally as well as nationally. As hip-hop grew in popularity in both the United States and in other countries, communities who started out only emulating American hip-hop appropriated and created their own versions of hip-hop music and culture.

The eventual development of all of the different derivations and permutations of hip-hop created friction between the original communities in the South Bronx, and elsewhere, responsible for creating hip-hop and the new communities all over the United States and the world who had appropriated hip-hop. Inevitability, criticisms of the non-native forms of hip-hop arose and these "new" forms of hip-hop were attacked for not being "real". Many artists decried the commercialization of hip-hop music and culture and the development of "gangsta" hip-hop for popularizing a thug aesthetic, while others bemoaned the creation of hip-hop directed toward white audiences, which made up the bulk of the hip-hop market's purchasing power.

In academia, scholars use the term "authenticity", instead of "real", in their analyses of hip-hop and examine hip-hop culture and music in relation to African American and

Afro-Caribbean cultural history and identity. For example, scholars such as Russell A. Potter adopted analytical frameworks that restricted the extension of "authenticity" to non-native and non-African American derivations of hip-hop. For him and his cohorts, hip-hop culture and music was inextricably tied to notions of blackness and of black cultural and musical aesthetics. However, other scholars such as Tony Mitchell accurately pointed out that such a restrictive analysis and view of hip-hop is not only inappropriate, but also completely inapplicable for such a global phenomenon. The simple fact that hip-hop has been adopted all over the world and commands such a fervent following in countries as different as South Africa and South Korea indicate that hip-hop no longer represents just the community in the South Bronx where it was born.

Hip-hop's current status as an international phenomenon means that analytical frameworks that attempt to evaluate different permutations of hip-hop based on a strict interpretation of hip-hop music and culture inevitably fail to take into account the fact that hip-hop itself was born as a reflection of a local community. Initially, hip-hop music and culture represented the unique mixture of people and traditions located in the South Bronx and reflected their dissatisfactions, desires, and temperament. Hip-hop is a global cultural and musical phenomenon that derives "realness" and or "authenticity" from the local context or environment in which it manifests. Therefore, my thesis attempts to separate notions of authenticity from the historical analysis of hip-hop and engage hip-hop culture and music in local contexts. In particular, it analyzes hip-hop in South Africa during apartheid among the Coloured community of The Flats, and after apartheid among white South Africans with a particular focus on the controversial rap duo Die Antwoord.

Based on the appropriation of hip-hop and its development in South Africa, it is clear that the authenticity that scholars obsess over cannot be derived from academic evaluation. Furthermore, attempts to apply an "outside-in" criterion of evaluation ignore the very local nature of hip-hop and its role in the communities where it exists and, more importantly, persists. In South Africa, hip-hop provided the Coloured youth in the Flats an opportunity to find an identity, something that many Coloured hip-hop artists felt they lacked before they discovered and fell in love with hip-hop. As hip-hop grew in popularity and developed in South Africa, it provided a way for different racial and ethnic groups to interact. The local community not only embraced hip-hop in South Africa, but also used it to help alleviate some of the racial tensions and anger stoked by years of oppressive and racist rule under the National Party.

Like the situation that occurred after white hip-hop artists began appearing in the United States, the appropriation and creation of hip-hop music by white South Africans inevitably led to a backlash among the Coloured population. My third chapter focuses on the rap duo Die Antwoord, an Afrikaner group who is extremely popular abroad, but faces criticism and a lack of acceptance in their native South Africa. Members of the South African hip-hop and music communities criticize them, primarily, for using hip-hop music and rap as a means to make money. For many in South Africa, the group represents the worst of South African hip-hop: fake, manufactured, and not "real". However, these sorts of criticisms ignore the dedication that both Waddy Jones and Anri du Toit have for hip-hop and the very "real" fact that they persevered for almost two decades without hope of success. Their name, literally "The Answer" in Afrikaans, also reflects a displaced white community in South Africa marginalized and discriminated against after the end of

apartheid. For those South Africans who live in poverty and question their role in post-apartheid South Africa, Die Antwoord represents a boisterous, loud, and sometimes incoherent attempt to find the answer.

Hip-hop presents a difficult subject of analysis for a multitude of reasons. For example, there is a severe dearth of hip-hop scholarship and the existing scholarship maintains a strong US-centric bias. Furthermore, hip-hop scholarship focuses on ethereal concepts of authenticity, where the evaluative criterions for authenticity are not only highly suspect, but also arguably inapplicable to a global phenomenon such as hip-hop. In South Africa, Coloured youth forged a strong bond with hip-hop because it provided an identity for them and a means of protest. In the Flats, hip-hop authenticity or realness results from the strong relationship between the community and hip-hop music and culture. A relationship that not only echoes the sort that led to the development of hip-hop in the South Bronx, but all over the world in communities where hip-hop has taken hold. On the other hand, the production of hip-hop music by white South Africans not only challenges the local notions of "real" hip-hop, but also conceivably represents an attempt to steal an aspect of the Coloured community's identity.

My thesis demonstrates that authenticity or realness is derived in a local context from the community that hip-hop music represents. In South Africa, hip-hop music represents the Flats and Coloured communities. However, hip-hop also represents the displaced and newly marginalized white South Africans, many of who persist in abject poverty and are ignored in a country still struggling with latent anger over the end of apartheid. "Real" hip-hop in South Africa, therefore, means both the hip-hop produced and consumed in the Flats, but also the hip-hop of white South African artists such as Die Antwoord. In South Africa and

60

all over the world, hip-hop is a global phenomenon that reflects local phenomena. What is

real and what are not real only matters to the extent that hip-hop reflects the local

community.

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