HIP HOP AS A CULTURAL GENRE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSICAL TRADITION: A CRITICAL RACE THEORY ANALYSIS OF HIP HOP'S PIONEERS' EXPERIENCES.

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ABSTRACT

KAWACHI AHMON CLEMONS: Hip Hop as a Cultural Genre of the African American Musical Tradition: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of Hip Hop's pioneers' experiences. (Under the direction of George W. Noblit)

Today the classroom is filled with students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The reality of this cultural variance presents the educator with opportunities to teach from multiple perspectives. In developing the Hop Hop Initiative at North Carolina Central University I found that some educators (collegiate and pre-collegiate) have frowned upon and disavowed the notion of Hip Hop pedagogy. This study situates Hip Hop as an identifiable genre and culture within the African-American and Black musical tradition. My desire was to pursue a line of investigation, which presents plausible approaches to utilizing Hip Hop in a culturally responsive pedagogical framework.

The purpose of this study was to examine Hip Hop in its historical and cultural contexts. Shor (1992) posits that teachers who acknowledge the culture of students as fertile ground for instruction must recognize that teachers must also be learners. This project chronicled Hip Hop through the eyes of the individuals who contributed to the creation and development of the art form as compared and contrast to its majoritarian view. The outcome(s) of this study was to produce a document that will serve as a historical source for teachers who wish to incorporate aspects of Hip Hop into their classroom environment.

DEDICATION

To my son, keep on asking questions…

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my mentor, Deryl G. Hunt for guidance and unwavering faith during this process. I would also like to thank the Architects of Hip Hop, Christopher 'Play' Martin, and Patrick '9th Wonder' Douthit for intrusting me with the responsibility of representing their stories. Finally, I would like to show appreciation to my committee for their willingness to serve.

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Chapter 1

Why?

> *A person who cannot play chess can still watch a game of chess. He sees the moves being made just as clearly as his neighbor who knows the game. But the spectator who does not know the game cannot do what his neighbor does—appreciate the game…*
>
> (Ryle, 1949; Elliot, 1995, p. 174)

Introduction

As I began implementing the Hip Hop Initiative concept at North Carolina Central University, I received mixed reactions from faculty and staff concerning the value of Hip Hop discourse in higher education. In fact, much of the opposition came from people in my own department. I was somewhat understanding of colleague's dispositions in other areas like history, for example. But to have musicians disavow Hip Hop as an artistic and creative process was troubling. One faculty member in particular commented that Hip Hop was not music. On one level, I would agree. Hip Hop, as seen by many who are active participants in it, is a culture. Rap, on the other hand, is a particular music of Hip Hop. So one may see where I would loosely agree with my colleague's statement. Yet, he was really referring to rap. He concluded the so-called "music" of Hip Hop was not really music. That brief conversation has been exceedingly productive. A plethora of thoughts and questions for further inquiry have ensured.

Before moving on, it is necessary to share an understanding of what the Hip Hop Initiative is in concept and implementation. The Hip Hop Initiative concept was developed

while pursuing my master's degree at FIU. Originally called SIMI (Student Interdisciplinary Management Institute), the project's goal was to promote student excellence, leadership, and skill-based knowledge acquisition and to encourage community building through innovative university programming. Over the years SIMI developed into what I now call the Hip Hop Initiative. Now the ultimate goal is to have Hip Hop Initiatives at multiple universities across the country—a consortium of schools engaged in employing Hip Hop as a vehicle for political and cultural engagement.

The Hip Hop Initiative

The goal of the Hip Hop Initiative is to present Hip Hop in a cultural context where students (university and pre-collegiate) are encouraged to become critically engaged in a dialogue that addresses the political, social, and moral issues impacting their generation. Currently the Hip Hop Initiative is divided into four areas: Media & Entertainment Collegiate Conference (formerly the Hip Hop Summit), a Campus Record Label/Media Company, a Hip Hop in Context course, a lecture series, and the RAP (Readiness and Academic Preparedness) program.

The Hip Hop Summit was designed to assess the media in the African-American community and provide area college students with a greater understanding of the new developments in the industry and how to break into the business. Some of the topics included "Men and Women: The Fight for Power in the Music Industry," "Online Media: the wave of the future," "Parents Just Don't Understand: Information and resources for parents of the Hip Hop generation," "So You Want to be in Media: Radio, TV and Print," and many other sessions. In continuing to develop this area we saw fit to change the name of this component.

Its current name reflects the initiative's growth in addressing broader issues of media and entertainment, and its impact on the emerging generation.

The Campus Record Label/Media Company seeks to provide university students opportunities to see first hand the daily intricacies of the recording and entertainment industries. Through experiential based learning, students will be exposed to: marketing concepts, music publishing, retailing of sheet music, music books and magazines, production, distribution, and sales of recorded music. As a student interdisciplinary management project the goal is to promote student excellence, leadership, and skill-based knowledge acquisition and to encourage community building. The campus label provides students with an opportunity to explore their individual strengths. Through an entrepreneurial approach, students are encouraged to build and manage their strengths while seeking to build community.

Hip Hop in Context is a university level course that examines the cultural phenomenon through its development, history, communication style, dance form, music, and artistic process. Throughout the course students explore the dynamics of race, gender, youth, and class. The course employs various sources for analysis and information including: videos, commercials, movies, songs and other multimedia sources. The Hip Hop lecture series expands on the course foundation by involving Hip Hop artists as primary sources for information on the creation and development of its art forms.

RAP is the initiative's pre-collegiate component. RAP utilizes innovative pedagogical practices that appeal to the interests of students, building on foundations of cultural experiences that have relevance to the lives of these students. RAP programming includes: Flocabulary, the Durham Freedom School, P-Tones Records Academy, and Hip Hop in

Education Workshops. The RAP component will serve as the foundation for its rationale, theory, and methodology for this dissertation study.

Purpose of this Study

This dissertation is a part of a larger study that seeks to further develop and implement a Hip Hop curriculum for use in the music classroom. There is no doubt that as colleagues and I move forward with this mode of thinking, the work will transcend beyond a music education context, but for now music is where it is situated. The rationale for embarking on such a task is in part due to my experiences growing up in the current schooling process[1]. Throughout this text I will share how those experiences lead to my current state of thinking. Gardner (2004) posits that, "until recently, those involved in education have not appreciated the strength of the initial conception, stereotypes, and 'scripts' that students bring to their school learning nor the difficulty of refashioning or eradicating them. We have failed to appreciate that *in nearly every student there is a five-year-old 'unschooled' mind struggling to get out and express itself"* (p. 5).

I am informed and situated in a discourse that is relatively new in academia and at times this discourse contradicts its (academia's) commonsensical ontology. For that reason, it is logical that other intellectuals may not see this as a worthy field of study. That being the case, I encourage those with this narrow perspective to see the opportunities the music and culture of Hip Hop offer as a means of developing alternative methods to the current paradigm of schooling. To do this, we must engage in an intergenerational discourse that

[1] Gardner (2004) defines school as an institution in which a group of young persons, rarely related by blood but usually belonging to the same social group, assemble on a regular basis in the company of a competent older individual, for the explicit purpose of acquiring one or more skills valued by the wider community (p. 127).

incites change—change in thoughts and habits. In essence, I am proposing more than just an appreciation. What is needed is an understanding.

The purpose of this study is to examine Hip Hop in its historical and cultural contexts. This project will chronicle Hip Hop through the eyes of the individuals who contributed to the creation and development of the art form as compared and contrast to its majoritarian view. The outcome of this study is a document that will serve as a historical resource for teachers who wish to incorporate aspects of Hip Hop into their classroom environment.

My introductory commentary of the academy's disavowing of Hip Hop illustrates the presence of a dominant ideology fueled by anti-Hip Hop rhetoric and imagery. This position that the formally educated (African Americans in particular) possesses toward Hip Hop is an interesting but understandable dynamic. How we arrived at the present state of affairs can be understood by studying the forces effective in the development of the Negro education since it was systematically undertaken immediately after Emancipation (Woodson, 1933, p.9). I will argue that the negative rhetoric and imagery of Hip Hop serves as a methodological continuation of divisive hegemonic practices that have plagued people of color throughout their history in America[2]. This study will analyze a series of narratives from Hip Hop artists through the theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). The utilization of CRT in this project will present Hip Hop artists' stories as counter narratives to a majoritarian account of Hip Hop. Swartz (1992) refers to the concept of majoritarian story as 'master scripting'. Master scripting serves to silence the voices of others to maintain and legitimize White, middle-class, and male dominated norms. All other accounts and perspectives, as Swartz maintains, are omitted from the master script unless they can be disempowered through

[2] According to Yasso (2006) people of color, communities of color, and students of color are all terms referring to African American, Native American, Chicanos/os, Latinas/os, and Asian Americans, also referred to as racial "minorities" or underrepresented groups (p. 17).

misrepresentation (p. 341). For the purpose of this study the CNN broadcast of Paula Zahn NOW (Hip Hop: Art or Poison?) that aired February 21, 2007 serves as a majoritarian account of Hip Hop. My guiding questions are as follows:

1. What historical and/or biographical account(s) do the Architects of Hip Hop provide[3]?
2. How do these accounts compare/contrast with the majoritarian story as exemplified in Paula Zahn NOW?

The conditions of today have been determined by what has taken place in the past, and in a careful study of this history we may see more clearly the great theatre of events in which the Negro has played a part (Woodson, 1933, p. 9). Apple (2004) suggests that schools not only control people; they also help control meaning. Since they preserve and distribute what is perceived to be "legitimate knowledge"—the knowledge that "we all must have", schools confer cultural legitimacy on the knowledge of other groups (p. 61). What then does this mean for the student of color?

Education and the Inferiority Paradigm

Throughout the development and implementation of American education, many philosophical ideas emerged. G. Stanley Hall's work on children's mental development played a major role in shaping the American curriculum. Hall, a supporter of the doctrine of culture-epochs posited, "to understand either the child or the race we must constantly refer to the other" (Hall, 1904; Kliebard, 2004, p. 39). According to Kliebard, it was further believed that "children's behavior had roots in historical periods or epochs, and this connection

[3] The Architects of Hip Hop treatment provided by Christopher "Play" Martin is listed in Appendix A.

allegedly provided clues as to what to teach" (p. 39). Unfortunately for Blacks and other minorities, what was taught supported the notions of racial and cultural inferiority. Gonzaléz (2005) notes, "several trends viewed the culture of poor and minoritized students as the cause of educational failure" (p. 34). Galton's, "Heredity Talent and Character,"… asserts that human character and capacities are shaped by heredity… (Haller, 1984; Watkins, 2001, p. 36). Galton's work, published in 1865, served as a testament for those who had a particular interest in preserving the social and economic conditions present in the pre-emancipation proclamation period. Galton, in an effort to further solidify his position, sought to codify his findings. He utilized ranking systems that placed the ancient Greeks at the top followed by Anglo-Saxons and other Europeans, followed by Africans, with Australian aborigines at the bottom (Watkins, 2001, p. 36). This covert, and sometimes overt rationale has placed the student of color in an unfair position. Gonzaléz further argues that by explaining educational achievement disparities and differential social mobility through recourse to forces within the culture (in the domestic realm and hence outside of the public purview), the dominant writing of social theory legitimized the marginalization of many students (p. 34).

Modern day educators must begin to view the student's cultural capital as legitimate within the current structure of the American educational system so that it may be used as a springboard to further develop the minds of the children they serve. In doing this, many educator's will have to rethink the way that their lessons are developed and presented. This rethinking is a necessary condition given the fact that teacher education programs are rooted in a social theoretical framework that Gonzaléz suggests is problematic. My position is that curriculum is fluid and its practice is ever evolving. Grumet (1981) posits that "curriculum is

the child of culture, and their relation is as complex and reciprocal as are any that bond the generations" (p. 140).

Culture and Curriculum

Through the course of time, culture has played a great role in how people are perceived and consequently received by others. Directed towards the 'cultivation' of all that was distinctively human in humanity, education in 'culture' provided for the formation of the 'best self' that might qualify and overrule the 'ordinary selves' of everyday class and sectional loyalty in an increasingly stratified society (Williams, 1961; Davis, 2005, p. 48). Education as it related to the acquisition and preservation of wealth and class was and continues to be a most viable issue. Counts (1932) brings to the forefront what he believes to be "the most crucial issue in education-the question of the nature and extent of the influence which the school should exercise over the development of the child" (p. 10). Giroux (1992) notes that "the ways in which student experience is produced, organized, and legitimated in schools has become an increasingly important theoretical consideration for understanding how schools function to produce and authorize particular forms of meaning" (p. 180). The significance of experience has also been racially problematized in educational research. Whereas the dominant pseudoscientific constructs about learning and ability from the nineteenth century forward were deeply rooted in assumptions of genetic inferiority, elements of the progressive educational research community from the 1960s forward argued not on the basis of genetic inferiority but, rather that African Americans grew up in a deficit culture that did not prepare children from this community to do well academically in school (Lee, 2004, p. 59; Bereiter & Engleman, 1966).

Critical Race Theory

In an effort to combat American Education's historic *genetic inferiority* and *cultural deficit* claim for people of color and other marginalized groups, there must be a systematic approach that lends itself to change. The development of a culturally responsive music curriculum serves as a response to the social and political issues that have marginalized students of color in American schools. As previously mentioned, this dissertation utilizes Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the base of its theoretical framework in re-presenting Hip Hop through the eyes of its creators. Founded in the area of legal studies, CRT serves as a means to confront, with the intent of political and social reformation, the debilitating forces of racial discrimination. Race is a socially constructed category, created to differentiate groups based primarily on skin color, phenotype, ethnicity, and culture for the purpose of showing the superiority or dominance of one group over another (Haney Lopez, 1994; Yosso, 2006). CRT as explained by Ladson-Billings (2003) "is about deploying race and racial theory as a challenge to traditional notions of diversity and social hierarchy" (p. 57). CRT, as applied in the educational arena, sees the official knowledge (Apple, 1993) of the school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain the current social order (Ladson-Billings, 2003, p. 59). Critical Race Theorists, as West (1995) notes, "put forward novel readings of a hidden past that disclose the flagrant shortcomings of the treacherous present in the light of unrealized---though not unrealizable---possibilities for human freedom and equality" (p. xi-xii). A major component of CRT is the use of narrative in illuminating the hidden past to counter the dominant story that has sought to marginalize people of color throughout the course of time.

Delgado (1989) offers four points of view for the use of story and voice in CRT

scholarship: 1) Reality is socially constructed, 2) Stories are a powerful means for destroying and changing mind-sets, 3) Stories have a community building function, and 4) Stories provide members of out-groups mental self-preservation. For the purpose of my study I will focus on CRT's tenant of naming our own. Naming "our own" or "one's own", conceptually deals with the notion of reality. Reality as a social construct posits the notion that what we perceive as "real" is what is often told to us. The narrative, as Hayden White (1990) explains is a useful tool in understanding other people. When the story, as told by and through the eyes of various cultures is experienced, it serves as a counter to monolithic and dysconscious perspectives of the world. The narrative, as White suggests, "is a meta-code, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted' (p. 1).

The impulse of telling stories derives from cultural heritage. Stories are means for individuals to project and present themselves, declare what is important and valuable, give structure to perceptions, make general facts more meaningful to specific personal lives, connect the self with others, proclaim the self as cultural being, develop a healthy sense of self, and forge new meanings and relationships, or build community (Gay, 2000, p. 3). Community Building involves the so-called *insiders* being willing to establish fruitful and productive relationships with the so-called *outsiders* within any community, whether it be a school, a university, a business, or a religious organization, with a thrust on including them in projects or programs from which they had previously been excluded (Howard, 1997; Rice, 2001). This often begins with an exchange of stories.

Throughout the course of time people have told stories as a means of preservation of their particular culture. Telling ourselves our own stories—interpreting the nature of our

world to ourselves, asking and answering epistemological and ontological questions in our own voices and on our own terms—has as much as any single factor been responsible for the survival of African-Americans and their culture (Gates, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1992, p. 378). Here I use the term "story" figuratively and suggest that a people's "narrative" can be told and experienced through musical, visual, dance, and/or dramatic expression. As such, the Arts become integral to the story telling process.

Chapter Organization

The chapters that follow elaborate on the central subject of developing the Hip Hop Initiative, the emerging Hip Hop pedagogy for music educators and the resonant themes discussed in this introductory chapter. Central to my argument are the notions of race and its debilitating characteristics. The ideas as expressed herein are not intended to provide a definitive answer to the ills and challenges facing the contemporary music educator but rather an attempt to illustrate plausible alternatives to current pedagogical practices. Chapter two situates the study of Hip Hop as an extended arm of the African-American and Black musical traditions. I describe the role of the bard in African cultures and illustrate how the Hip Hop MC (also called an emcee or rapper) follows the lineage of this great historical custom. I then position Hip Hop within an intellectual framework by juxtaposing Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences with the four elements of Hip Hop. The chapter continues with a praxial philosophy of music education that views Hip Hop production as an identifiable musical practice.

As I shift to a methodological modality the next chapter calls upon the theoretical application of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Again, with race as a central theme, I call to

attention the dominant society's use of race to marginalize peoples of color. In addition to CRT, I employ an ethnomusicological perspective that recognizes the value of all cultural groups' musical traditions. It is here that I also identify the method of data collection and narrative analysis.

A great deal of this study involves 'outsider' perceptions of Hip Hop. As such, I found it necessary to incorporate a theory of representation that seeks to provide an understanding of the ways 'meaning' is shaped. Appropriately titled, Who's House: Representin' Hip Hop, I discuss a variety of representations of Hip Hop and the methods employed to control those considered 'on the margins' of society.

The next chapter presents Paula Zahn's episode, "Hip Hop: Art or Poison". I begin by discussing the practice of signifying in creating meaning. The role of the media in shaping opinion and influencing behavior is also discussed. The chapter offers a critique on 'the aesthetic' and how it too reifies media hegemony.

To offer a countermeasure of the perspective as exemplified in Paula Zahn a series of narratives as told by Hip Hop's pioneers is developed and employed. The stories capture an essence of Hip Hop that is rarely seen or heard. In a conversation on the lines of James Lipton's *Inside the actor's studio,* Christopher "Play" Martin's candid interviews serve as the core of the counter storytelling methods as espoused in CRT research. In wrapping up this work, the final chapter discusses a plausible rationale for using Hip Hop in the classroom. The use of critical pedagogy is the hallmark of this section. It is my hope that in the chapters that follow, readers will see the value of the developing Hip Hop pedagogy and allow the text to foster questions about what is taught and how that knowledge is disseminated in schools. It is my hope to provoke and challenge widely held pedagogical practices and beliefs.

Chapter 2

Situating Hip Hop

> *I did not come to America to interpret Wagner for the public. I came to discover what young Americans had in them and to help them express it. I am now satisfied that the future of music in this country must be founded upon what are called the Negro melodies. In the Negro melodies of America I discovered all that is needed for a great noble school of music. They are pathetic, tender, passionate, melancholy, solemn, religious, bold, merry, gay, or what you will.*
>
> Antonín Dvorák, 1892 (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2003, p. 57)

Monolithic Experiences in Music Education

I can recall taking classes during my middle school days on music theory and music appreciation. The school I attended was one of two Arts magnet programs in the county. Interestingly enough, we (the students) were developing what appeared to be an appreciation for the *beauty* of music as a transformative experience. We were listening to the music without taking into the account the creation of the music. Throughout my adolescent course of study I was immersed in the study of music from the perspective of analyzing what exists as a means of uncovering a deeper knowledge of musical forms. As a result of this and other artistic experiences, I decided to take on the arduous task of majoring in music. Upon graduation from high school I attended Florida A&M University. While in college studying musical form and analysis, my professor would comment on the marvelous way various composers' music followed a logical form in the creation of musical works. One day I

commented, “I’m not sure if all that thought went into this. I think he (the composer) was just playing and simply wrote what sounded good”. I know now that what I was articulating was the concept of musicing. It (musicing) serves to remind us that long before there were musical compositions there was music making in the sense of singing and playing remembered renditions and improvisations; that many cultures still view music as something people do (Elliot, 1995, p. 49). As with all knowledge, musicianship depends on context and place (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; cited in Froehlich, 2007, p. 109). Elliot further posits that “during the continuous actions of singing or playing instruments *our musical knowledge is in our actions; our musical thinking and knowing is in our musical doing and making”* (p. 56).

This study situates Hip Hop as an identifiable genre and culture within the African-American and Black musical tradition. The Center for Black Music Research (CBMR) distinguishes operationally between *African-American* music and *black* music.

> In the CBMR's lexicon, African-American music emanates directly from the black experience in the United States. Black music, on the other hand, is music in any style or genre composed by people of African descent - including European and European-derived concert-hall music by black composers - as well as vernacular musics created and performed by African-descended people the world over, including African-American music, African music, and Afro-Latin American or Afro-Caribbean music (CMBR, 2007).

Historically, African American music, by way of African music is largely passed down aurally and by rote. In the African tradition “the bard is a storyteller-singer and above all a historian who chronicles the nations’ history and transmits cultural traditions and mores through performance” (Keyes, 2008, p. 5). My collegiate commentary on analyzing music was largely influenced by a cultural framework deep in my psyche. My understanding of form and analysis, as I attempted to express was simply that, one had to *think it* and/or *play it* before one *wrote it.* In the context of this current study my sentiments are echoed. Hip Hop,

an artistic form of expression, is a process of kinetic creativity that is constantly shaping and evolving. Hip Hop pioneer, Afrika Bambaataa notes that although it [rap] began in the Bronx, it goes back to Africa because you had chanting style of rapping (Bambaataa interview in Keyes, 2008, p. 4). DJ Kool Herc, who is considered to be one of Hip Hop's founding fathers comments, "Music was always our way of information—it was the drums. They took it away from us in Africa, now we found it again. The music is our fuckin' drums man." (George, 2004, p. 55). Afrika Bambaataa comments further on the early influences on the creation of Hip Hop.

> I'll give credit to my mother. When I was growing up in the '60s, I used to hear a lot of the Motown sounds, James Brown sounds, the Stax sounds, Isaac Hayes and all of them. As well as Edith Piaf, Barbra Streisand, the Beatles, the Who, Led Zeppelin. From there I started knowing a lot about a lot of different music and that's when I first heard African music from Miriam Makeeba. I was listening to this sister talk about things in South Africa which I really didn't understand at the time. One movie that grabbed my attention was this movie called Zulu. At the time when you were seeing Black people on TV, you would see us in degrading roles[4]. So to see this movie with Black people fighting for their land was a big inspiration for me…I said to myself, "When I get older, I'ma have me a Zulu Nation" (George, p. 49-50).

In an effort to conceptualize the cultural significance of Hip Hop music it is important not only to understand its origins but its development over the past 30 years as well. Stuart Hall (1999) articulates this notion a bit further.

> Instead of asking what are people's roots, we ought to think about what are their *routes*, the different points by which they have come to be now; they are, in a sense, the sum of those differences. These routes hold us in places, but what they don't do is hold us in the same place. We need to try to make sense of the connections with where we think we were *then* as compared to where we are *now*. That is what biography or the unfolding sense of the self or the stories we tell ourselves or the autobiographies we write are meant to do, to convince ourselves that these are not a

[4] As the decade of the 70s progressed and the Black Public Sphere began to exhibit early signs of deterioration, predicated on black middle-class flight, the demise of central cities, and the post industrial transformation of urban economies, black identity—in other words Blackness—became largely mediated and thus determined by mechanisms of mass consumer culture (Neal, 2008, p. 78).

> series of leaps in the dark that we took, but they did have some logic, though it's not the logic of time or cause or sequence. But there is a logic of connected meaning.

From the beginning, Hip Hop served as a voice for the voiceless. Prior to 1975, New York City school system boasted a citywide arts curriculum, in which students had opportunities to take part in dance, theater, music, visual and literary arts at every stage of their education. The fiscal budget crisis of the 1970s immediately eroded this commitment (Center for Arts Education [CAE], 2007). In fact, the Bronx (where Hip Hop originated) like many urban areas during this period went through a depression type era. White flight, coupled with urban renewal efforts and Robert Moses' plan for the Bronx Expressway deteriorated inner-city life[5].

Under the banner of "urban renewal," the black working class and working poor were marginalized and isolated from the engines of the postindustrial city—the privatization of public space in downtown areas being emblematic—and instead exposed to intense poverty and rampant unemployment, which subsequently challenged traditional desires to maintain community (Neal, 1999, p.130). Those who could not afford to get out were forced to remain in what many refer to as 'the slums'. By the late 1970s, the commodification of the black poor or underclass as human spectacle became a standard troupe of mass culture, parlaying a clear sense of social difference from "blackness" for many mainstream consumers, including an emerging black middle class[6] (Neal 1999, p. 131).

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[5] Between the late 1930s and the late 1960s Moses, a very powerful city planner, executed a number of public works projects, highways, parks and housing projects that significantly reshaped the profile of New York City. In 1959, city, state, and federal authorities began the implementation his planned Cross-Bronx Expressway that cut directly through the center of the most heavily populated working areas of the Bronx (Rose, 1994, p. 30-1).

[6] According to Neal, he is not suggesting that "dysfunction" among white communities did not exist; rather he is suggesting that the mass mediated images of the black underclass often served as the only images available to mainstream consumers. My thesis on the majoritatian perspective of Hip Hop is that it continues to reify notions of Black inferiority and dysfunctionality by serving monolithic representations of its culture.

In response to this plight, urban youth began to develop a cohort that would usher in a new voice for the community. These cohorts, often called posses or crews, forged new identities for these downtrodden youth. "Early Puerto Rican, Afro-Caribbean, and black American Hip Hop artists transformed obsolete vocational skills from marginal occupations into the raw materials for creativity and resistance" (Rose 1994, p. 34). Rose writes further on the many Hip-Hop pioneers trained in areas with diminishing employment opportunities as well as the debilitating social effects of living in an impoverished situation.

> Puerto Rican graffiti artist Futura graduated from a trade school specializing in the printing industry. However most of the jobs for which he was being trained had already been computerized, he found himself working at McDonald's after graduation. Jamaican DJ Kool Herc attended Alfred E. Smith auto mechanic trade school, and African-American Grandmaster Flash learned how to repair electronic equipment at Samuel Gompers vocational High School. Salt and Pepa (both with family roots in the West Indies) worked as telemarketing representatives at Sears while considering nursing school. Crazy Legs began breakdancing largely because his single mother couldn't afford Little League baseball fees (Rose, 1994, p 35).

What do you do when the job for which you were prepared is no longer an option? Where do you go when all the doors are closed? In the face of all despair, early Hip Hop artists began to invoke bardic traditions by using Black poetic speech as a means of transgression from the plight of their everyday situations. Black poetic speech is predicated on what communication scholars call *nommo*[7], "the power of the word" (Keyes 2008, p. 8). In the song "The Message" (Fletcher, Glover, Robinson & Chase, 2005, track 5), Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five illustrates the essence of Hip Hop as a "cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutally truncated

[7] The term *nommo,* as Ceola Baber (1987) expounds, "generates the energy needed to deal with life's twists and turns; sustains our spirits in the face of insurmountable odds [and] transforms psychological suffering into external denouncements…" (p. 83)

opportunity, and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African-American and Caribbean history, identity, and community" (Rose, 1994, p. 21).

> Broken glass everywhere
> People pissing on the stairs, you know they just don't care
> I can't take the smell, I can't take the noise
> Got no money to move out, I guess I got no choice
> Rats in the front room, roaches in the back
> Junkies in the alley with a baseball bat
> I tried to get away, but I couldn't' get far
> Cause the man with the tow-truck repossessed my car
> Chorus:
> Dont push me, cause I'm close to the edge
> I'm trying not to loose my head
> It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder
> How I keep from going under

Hanley (in press) posits that Hip Hop poetry is 'foremost a performance art". To do it well requires an incredible amount of skill and intellect that involves "play with metaphor, simile, alliteration, and other such literary gymnastics while navigating rhythms in a stream of meaning".

The Intellectual process of Hip Hop

For the past two years, I have had the opportunity to co-teach a course entitled *Hip Hop in Context* with Christopher "Play" Martin, of the group Kid n' Play and DJ/producer extraordinaire 9th Wonder. *Hip Hop in Context* examines the cultural phenomenon through its development, history, communication style, dance form, music, and artistic process. Through the course students explore the dynamics of race, gender, youth, and class. The course employs various sources for information and analysis including: videos, commercials, movies, songs and other multimedia sources. Each semester, Chris prefaces the course by telling the students they have to forget what they *think* they know about Hip Hop and

imagine a time when the MC (rapper) did not exist. For many, this concept is hard to believe. Today, the music of Hip Hop is primarily an MC centered arena. But there was a time when the DJ was the center of attention. The "featured attraction" so to speak. The following texts juxtapose the theoretical perspectives of Harvard psychologist, Howard Gardner to the elements of Hip Hop and the intellectual capacity present in each domain as well as the cognitive aptitude necessary for those who participate on the highest levels of engagement of Hip Hop Arts.

As the culture of Hip Hop developed, many artistic elements were born. The first was the DJ. As previously mentioned, the concept of DJing as we know it today, was born out of the desire to present an atmosphere of continuous discourse through out the jam (party). Before the advent of using two turntables the life of the party was interrupted due to the fact that time was needed to change records. Out of this dilemma, was born the cue system, which would allow continuous play of the music. The invention of the cue system is a direct result of analyzing a problem and developing a plausible and logical solution. Grandmaster Flash comments on the creation of the cue system:

> I had to custom make my cue system…I couldn't afford a mixer with a built-in cue system. I had to actually get a single pole-double throw switch, crazy glue it to the top of my mixer…so when you clicked it over you would hear the other turntable in advance. But the whole idea of hearing the cut ahead of time took three years to come into being (George, 2004, p. 49).

In Howard Gardner's world this is known as Logical-mathematical intelligence. In an effort to communicate with the audience, the DJ exhibits an interpersonalistic quality as well. According to Gardner (1999), interpersonal intelligence is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people (p. 43). It allows people to work effectively with others. Educators, salespeople, religious and political leaders and

counselors all need a well-developed interpersonal intelligence (Smith 2002). As the DJ plays music, the crowd responds. As a result of 'moving the crowd', the DJ displays his/her heightened sense of awareness of what the crowd likes (or wants to hear). Conversely, if a song is played and the crowd is not "feeling the beat" (responding) he /she then must navigate through the multiplicity of records (today mp3s) to find a tune that arouses the senses of the participating audience.

The second element of Hip Hop is MCing. Taken from the term Master/Mistress of Ceremony, the MC was the voice of the party or event[8]. In the beginning, the MC was not a direct participant in the party process. He only engaged with the DJ often with his back facing the crowd. At some point in time the MC turned and faced the crowd and became actively engaged in the party process, often citing the famous line, "Throw your hands in the air and wave 'em like you just don't care[9]". As DJ Kool Herc notes, individuals would recite "little phrases and words from the neighborhood that we used on the corner…Like we talkin' to a friend of ours out there in the crowd" (George, 2004, p. 52). As the MC evolved, he began to 'spit' (recite) freestyle rhymes. Grandmaster Flash recalls, "Kid Creole and his brother Melle Mel were the first to flow and have a poetic feel to their rhymes. They were the first rhyme technicians" (George, 2004, p. 52). These poetic improvisations possess qualities of Gardner's linguistic intelligence, which involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals (p. 41). This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information.

[8] The term MC, as noted by Christopher "Play" Martin, is also often defined as, "microphone checker" or "move the crowd" which implies an ability to get the crowd moving (dancing) during a DJ's set (party).

[9] Grandmaster Flash cites Cowboy with the creation of this and other phrases such as, "Clap to the Beat!" and "Somebody scream!" (George, 2004, p. 52).

Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence (Smith 2002).

The third and fourth elements of Hip Hop involve bodily-kinesthetic and spatial ways of knowing. B-Boying or break dancing is a form of creative movement that has spawned a generation of dancing acrobatics. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body (like the hand or the mouth) to solve problems or fashion products (p.42). It is the faculty to use mental abilities to coordinate bodily movements. Howard Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related (Smith 2002). The final element of Hip Hop involves the use of visual imagery in the form of writing or what is commonly referred to as graffiti art. As Hip Hop music emerged so did the new outlet for artistic visibility. The word Graffiti comes from the Greek word *graphein,* which simply means, "to write". This evolved into the Latin word *graffito*. Graffiti is the plural form of *graffito*. Graffiti, a kin to visual art, represents an aesthetic that has aided in the cultural production of Hip Hop's creative processes. Graffiti art originated in the late 1960s and was primarily used by political activists to make statements and by street gangs to mark territory. Graffiti culture quickly became a social scene as young men and women began to form crews that "tagged" together. "Tagging" is another word for graffiti as it describes a style of graffiti writing. Graffiti artists or taggers used various mediums to create their art. The most common tools were pens and markers and eventually artists began using spray paint. To manipulate the spray paint, artists would change the caps to the aerosol can to create more colorful and intricate pieces. This visual representation of Hip Hop invokes a spatial intelligence, which involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

As previously mentioned, the current study is an extension of an evolving curriculum that infuses Hip Hop within a music education paradigm. As a resource for music educators, this dissertation offers Hip Hop as an additional tool in developing musical skills and musical knowledge through students' cultural practices outside of the classroom. The preceding discussion of Hip Hop's formation, in relation to societal conditions in urban New York, is directly in line with Bullivant's (1993) notion of culture as "a group's program for survival in and adaptation to its environment" (Banks, 2007, p. 8). Culture, in its simplest form is "a way of life". This way of life includes food, clothing, geographic location, and language, to name a few. Shapiro (1971) elicits the thoughts of George Peter Murdock in further explaining culture. "The cultures of the world are systems of collective habits. Hunger, sex, fear, and other basic drives as well as acquired motivations, impel human beings to act" (p. 319). It is these intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors which situate Hip Hop as a distinct culture. The evolution of hip-hop corresponds with cultural theorist Raymond Williams's observation that the process of "formal innovation" is gradual, and although "residual" cultural practices from prior eras continue, new "emergent" cultural forms and practices may arise that challenge or disrupt the cultural dominant (Forman, 2004, p 9).

Hip Hop Music as Cultural Practice

For the sake of my argument that Hip Hop is a cultural musical process, I will focus on the element of DJing. In offering a more concrete example of Hip Hop as an emerging cultural form Williams (1981) states, "there are always important works which belong to these early stages of particular forms, and it is easy to miss their formal significance by comparison with preceding or succeeding mature examples…. It is then easy to miss one of

the key elements in cultural production: innovation as it is happening; innovation in process" (Williams, 1981; Forman, 2004, p. 9).

In discussing Hip Hop music in terms of "cultural practice" I will employ David Elliott's praxial philosophy of musical learning. Elliott (1995) argues that "music making and music listening are unique forms of thinking and unique sources of the most important kinds of knowledge human beings can gain" (p. 14). Elliot further states that "the term *praxial* emphasizes that music ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and values evidenced in actual music making and music listening in specific cultural contexts" (p. 14). Banks (2007) posits that people in a culture usually interpret the meanings of symbols, artifacts, and behaviors in the same or similar ways (p. 8). The following examples seek to position Hip Hop music in a *musicing* framework, further quantifying it as a true cultural phenomenon worthy of academic study.

When one listens to a rap record it is often the beat that sticks in your head long after the song has passed from your ears. It is at this place where Hip Hop is grounded. Artistic appropriation is the historical source of hip-hop music and still remains the core of its aesthetic form and message (Shusterman, 1991, p. 614). As previously mentioned the MC would recite poetic verses and catchy sayings over what was known as the *break* or *get down* part of the music at a party. The term "break" refers to *any* segment of music (usually four measures or less) that could be sampled and repeated (Schloss, 2004, p. 36). Historically, the DJ would find the break and loop it (play continuously) with the use of two turntables. An early example of this concept in practice is the recording of *Rapper's Delight*. This song uses a break from the 1979 disco song *Good Times* by Chic. As the role of the MC and the music of Hip Hop developed there was a need to further experiment with multiple ways to

manipulate the break. By nature of this process many DJs evolved into producers or what is commonly referred to in the practice of Hip Hop production as beat makers.

The process of making beats like all musical compositions requires an extreme amount of skill and dedication to the artistic practice. The concept of *musicing* as employed in this work suggests a practice specific musicianship that involves listening as a part of the compositional process. The musicianship required to compose or in this case sample "particular kinds of music develops in relation to the thinking of other composers and performers, past and present, who have immersed themselves in the achievement and the authority (or the standards and traditions) of particular compositional practices" (Elliot 1995, p. 162).

The role of music creation in Hip Hop was quite different than that of other genres. There were typically no live musicians to record a session. In contrast to preceding African American and Black musics "hip hop did not take mere melodies or musical phrases, that is, abstract musical patterns exemplifiable in different performances…instead it lifted concrete sound-events, prerecorded token performances of such musical patterns" (Schusterman, 1991, p. 615). This was not actually because there were no musicians to play but rather a result of the Hip Hop producer's inner compositional ear. One of the major challenges of performing hip-hop on live instruments is …that many of hip-hop's musical gestures (such as sixteenth notes played on a bass drum) are virtually impossible to reproduce without electronic editing (Schloss, p. 42).

In following Elliot's notion of musicianship there must be a set of criteria that serves as a foundation for the standards and traditions of a compositional domain. Schloss' research on sample based Hip Hop production references what he calls, "sampling ethics" as the basis

for its philosophical and aesthetic framework. For my argument I will bring to the forefront Schloss' ethical principle of "No biting".

Biting refers to the use of a sample or work that someone has already used. For example, MC Hammer's *You Can't Touch This,* used a loop of Rick James' *Super Freak*. Under the stipulated guidelines it would be unethical to use this same loop in the same fashion. However, it is possible to take a previously used loop and alter it as a means of developing a new sound or feel.

> I'm not gonna just take a loop that somebody else did—if that's all they did, just loop it-I'm not gonna come and do the same thing without doing something to make it better. (DJ Kool Akiem 1999; Schloss, 2004, p. 106)

This is exactly what producer Just Blaze did with the original Rick James composition. Blaze, under a creative guise took an existing sample and *created* or *brought to light* a break in the music. Blaze took the basic track and "chopped" the original loop to create a new sound. Chopping refers to altering a sampled phrase by dividing it into smaller segments and reconfiguring them in a different order (Schloss, p. 106). *Super Freak*, in this new compositional form was commonly referred to as the "Super Freak Flip". DJ and Grammy® award winning producer, 9th Wonder (personal communication, October, 12, 2007) comments on the first time he heard Just Blaze's instrumental "flip" of *Super Freak.*

> I was like, What! He originally had the beat on his myspace page. Man I called Pete Rock, Jazzy Jeff, and a few of my other producer friends and was like, have you heard the Super Freak flip that Blaze did? When I heard it I was like good god!

The "Super Freak Flip" is a concrete example of what Elliot (1995) terms "Arranging in Context". An arranger must know how performing, improvising, composing, conducting and listening relate within the musical contexts represented by both the original work and the

"new" work he is arranging (p. 170). In the preceding example, Blaze exhibits an understanding on a level comparable to what Gardner (2004) calls the disciplinary expert (or skilled person). The disciplinary expert is an individual of any age who has mastered the concepts and skills of a discipline or domain and can apply such knowledge appropriately in new situations (p. 7). Through experience, the disciplinary expert learns how to creatively manipulate the underlying structures in music thereby creating sounds and nuances that listeners like. These "likes" or "dislikes" in music are largely based on listener perceptions and expectations. As listeners "we expect certain pitches, rhythms, timbres, and so on to co-occur based on a statistical analysis our brain has performed of how often they have gone together in the past" (Levitin, 2006, p. 115).

Levitin further illustrates that dealing with standard situations our brain "extracts those elements that are common to multiple situations and creates a framework within which to place them; this framework is called a schema" (p. 115-6). According to Levitin, "schemas are everything. They frame our understanding; they're the system into which we place the elements and interpretations of an aesthetic object. Another word for schema is familiarity". Any efforts to connect music learning familiar to students outside of school with formal learning in school can strengthen a student's social as well as musical self and a school community's identity and pride (Froehlich 2007, p. 40).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

As a young student, I questioned motivations of the teacher and content within the general and music curriculum. I often inquired about the lack of hands-on and experiential learning in the general classroom. In thinking about the role of "familiarity" in the

educational process I recall wondering why information about Blacks was reserved mostly to the month of February. My grandparents and other elders often made note of individuals within the Black community who made contributions to the development and history of America. I wondered why these individuals who looked like me were not included in the text. As a result of this mental confusion and socially constructed ambiguity, I was often in a state of flux, wondering who was telling the truth. Jegede & Aikenhead (1999) refer to this coping of conflicting world views as, "collateral learning theory". Gardner (2004) posits that children the world over develop comparable theories about the world in which they live and the persons with whom they communicate; these reflect an interaction between biological inclinations and the children's own construction of the world into which they are born (p. 7-8). It is further suggested that learners do not extinguish prior beliefs as they encounter new, especially conflicting information (Méndez, 2006). Méndez further posits, "students may hold two opposing worldviews simultaneously. Therefore, it is important to use the cultural capital students bring to school to recognize the new knowledge with their prior knowledge" (p. 30). The mono-cultural representation of who's knowledge, or in our case who's music is worth knowing and by default deemed legitimate presents a problematic and non-inclusive learning environment. In contrast to this one-sided perspective teachers should, as Banks (1974) notes, "respect the cultural and linguistic characteristics of minority youths, and change the curriculum so that it will reflect their learning and cultural styles and greatly enhance their achievement" (as cited in Gay, 2000, p. 27-28).

As an educator, my aim is to provide all students with teaching and learning experiences. This concept places the student in the center of the educational process as learner and dispenser of acquired knowledge. In an effort to provide pedagogical experiences

that are student centered a culturally responsive adaptation to current mono-cultural pedagogical methods is necessary. Culturally responsive teaching can be defined as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them (Gay, 2000, p. 29). Affirmation by the inherent meanings of the music being studied is as advantageous as affinity with the music's delineations, allowing for possible 'celebration' by the music in the classroom (Green, 2005). Thus culturally relevant teaching uses student culture in order to maintain it (cultural relevance) and to transcend the negative effects of the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. 17).

Historically, the musical classroom has posited an ideology of 'the classics' (Bach, Mozart, and Greek antiquities for example) as the foundation for pedagogy. The privileged composers, as Wilkinson (1996) notes are "mostly European, mostly males, and are all exponents of the Western art music tradition as it evolved from the Middle Ages throughout the twentieth century" (p. 260). The problem with this notion is that it fails to recognize the cultural variety of the students within the classroom. Music historians have with increasing frequency turned their attention to American vernacular traditions, and their efforts at once to enlarge our understanding of the multicultural character of music today and further contradict the prevailing assumption of academia that Western art music constitutes the only subject worthy of serious study (Wilkinson, 1996, p, 260).

Students of color sing in community choirs and churches. Some have their own bands and singing groups. Others perform as part of cultural traditions. These cultural and communal experiences lay the foundation for these students' musical learning environments. An experience, as Dewey (1938) notes, "covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are

emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living" (p. 35).

It is here where Gardner and Levitin intersect. My thesis is that the biological proclivities that Gardner mentions form the basis of our schemas. As educators, our lot is to make connections between students' "inter" and "intra" frames of knowing. At stake is to bring learning and teaching contexts as closely together as possible (Froehlich 2007, p. 38).

By nature of our job, educators are charged with the task of imparting knowledge that will invariably shape the minds of students. Minds are cultural, they are the result of experience and the kind of experience a child secures in school is significantly influenced by the decisions we make about what to teach (Eisner, 1998, p. 45). Students learn best when they have autonomy in learning situations, know what they are asked to learn is relevant to their needs, draw upon their experiences, see that the subject matter is important, and is problem-centered rather that subject centered (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995; Méndez, 2006).

As a pedagogy and social philosophy, problem-posing focuses on power relations in the classroom, in the institution, in the formation of standard canons of knowledge, and in society at large (Shor, 1992, p. 31). As such, the culturally responsive curriculum requires educators to rethink knowledge construction so that students may be enabled to deconstruct the dysconscious realities within schooling. In a word, the educator is called to be a critical pedagogue. Critical educators, as Giroux argues must consider elements of popular culture such as Hip-hop music as a serious site for social knowledge to be discussed, interrogated, and critiqued (Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, p. 89). "Hip Hop is where many of our students

live—the music they listen to, their traditions, the language they speak, the clothes they wear, the way they interact in the streets" (Bruce & Davis, 2000, p. 122).

Current Hip Hop educational programs/curriculum

As I continue in the development of a music education curriculum that infuses Hip Hop as a culturally responsive method to learning, I have found a number of additional implementations of this concept in other subject areas. Kunjufu (2005) proposes a Hip Hop Street Curriculum. In this method, he offers students an opportunity to look at their culture as an integral part of the curriculum. Within the text Kunjufu presents examples of Black economics, strategies to avoid being unemployed, and school culture vs. Black culture to name a few. Sitomer and Cirelli (2004) offer an approach "to analyze the poetry of Hip-Hop and compare its motifs, themes, and general poetic devices (such as alliteration, rhyme scheme, figurative language, etc…) to the classic poems traditionally studied" (p. 2). Flocabulary, a concept developed by Alex Rappaport and Blake Harrison, utilizes Hip Hop to teach SAT-type vocabulary words. Recently the Flocabulary team has expanded their methods to introduce Shakespeare in a manner that is more digestible to students who find difficulty in navigating through Old English text.

The preceding examples offer what I consider to be plausible approaches to utilizing Hip Hop in a culturally responsive pedagogical framework. However, I also believe that it is equally important for the educator to develop an understanding of the culture employed as a culturally responsive and transformative agent. To address the latter, this study will seek to develop a historical account of Hip Hop for use by teachers and students in the classroom.

Chapter 3

Methodology

> *"…all representations are partisan. They are partisan because they generally represent only the point of view of the teller, and only reveal, or capture, that which the teller of the tale wishes to focus on"*
>
> Goodall (2000, p. 55)

Hip Hop expresses the desire of people of color to reclaim their history, reactivate forms of Black radicalism and contest the power of despair and economic depression that besiege the underclass across the globe. This dissertation is about understanding those who are at the margins of society through a historical analysis and critique of their musical expression. Neal (2002) notes, as does Larry Grossberg (1997), that "the margins are not inherently marginal", or in other words, those folks whom some blacks posit as on the margins of acceptable or even relevant black life—the niggas, the bitches, the queers, the baby-mama, to name a few—are as integral to that experience as those who try to keep them at arm's distance, rhetorically, spatially, or otherwise (p. 10).

Dorrell (2004) suggests that the most dominant and yet unjustified assumption in the field of music science is the assumption that it is *music* that must be explained. He further posits that many make assumptions about music without taking into account the plausible nature of human tendencies. These humanistic tendencies that "cause people to compose, perform and/or appreciate music can serve some biological purpose…[and] music is just a

side-effect of those tendencies" (Dorrell, p.50). In further pursuing intersections of the musical human tendencies of African American music traditions, I note West's (1991) commentary on Jazz. According to West:

> Jazz is the middle road between invisibility and anger. It is where self-confident creativity resides. Black music is paradigmatic of how black persons have best dealt with their humanity, their complexity—their good and bad, negative and positive aspects without being excessively preoccupied with whites. Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Coltrane were just being themselves (West 1991; Calmore, 1995, p.317-8).

In thinking about West's assertion on the idiom of Jazz and its musicians—I contend that in the spirit of biological and evolutionary musical practice—Hip Hop artists too were just being themselves. "Culled from the discourse of the postindustrial city, hip-hop reflected the growing visibility of a young, urban, and often angry so-called "underclass". Aesthetically the genre drew on the diverse musical sensibilities like James Brown and the Parliament/Funkadellic collective and on black oral traditions like the prison toasts, "The Dozens," and the Black Arts poets of the 1960s" (Neal, 1999, p. 125). Amiri Baraka (1995) expresses, in epic bardic form, the oppression, life, death and struggle of a people outcaste in a land that is not their indigenous home:

> If you ever find
> yourself, some where
> lost and surrounded
> by enemies
> who won't let you
> speak in your own language
> who destroy your statues
> & instruments, who ban
> your omm bomm ba boom
> then you are in trouble
> they ban your
> oom boom ba boom
> you in deep deep trouble
> humph!
> probably take you

several hundred years
to get
out!

Getting out involves a process of identifying and analyzing the debilitating conditions and causes of social and racial oppression. Historically, African-American cultural life has experienced a tension between an emphasis on maintaining and experiencing a unique self-identity, on the one hand, and an emphasis on fully participating in American society by relying on universalistic, rather than racially distinct, orientations, on the other (Calmore, 1995, p. 322). In the case of the early pioneers of Hip Hop this identifying and consequent verbal analysis came in the form of a novel creative expression commonly referred to today as rap music. In a discussion of rap's cultural and sociological suffrage to dominant ideologies Shusterman (1991) offers the following:

> Rap has not only suffered moral and aesthetic condemnations but also organized censorship, blacklists, arrests, and the police-enforced stopping of concerts. Moreover, on a different level of cultural combat, we find attempts to dilute and undermine rap's ethnic and political content by encouraging and exploiting its most bland, "sanitized," and commercial forms. None of this should be surprising. For rap's cultural roots and prime following belong to the black underclass of American society; and its militant black pride and thematizing of the ghetto experience represents a threatening siren to that society's complacent status quo. The threat is of course far more audible and urgent for the middle-brow public who not only interact more closely and competitively with the poor black population, but who rely on (and thus compete for) the same mass-media channels of cultural transmission, and who have a greater need to assert their sociocultural (and ultimately political) superiority over black America (p. 613).

As a method of asserting itself over Black America, the dominant society, via the media and other outlets, has developed a series of stock stories that attempt to reify its dominance. Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) argue that dominant groups often attempt to legitimate their position via ideological means or a set of beliefs that explains or justifies some actual or

potential social arrangement (p. 61). Shusterman's discussion of Hip Hop, through his rap illustration, calls further attention to these elusive hegemonic tactics. In the case of this study, critical race methodology is employed as a means of countering the majoritatian and minority majoritarian viewpoint of Hip Hop as negative and divisive.

Critical Race Methodology

Critical Race Methodology is defined by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) as a theoretically grounded approach to research that foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process (p. 24). It further seeks to offer an alternative view of socially marginalized people "to raise critical consciousness about social and racial injustice" (Yosso, 2006, p. 10). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) contend that CRT and critical race methodology have as least the following five elements that form their basic insights, perspectives, methodology, and pedagogy (p. 25):

1. The innercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination;
2. Use race in research to challenge the dominant scientific norms of objectivity and neutrality;
3. Ensure that research is connected with social justice concerns;
4. Make experiential knowledge central to the study and link this knowledge to other critical research and interpretive perspectives on race and racism;
5. Acknowledge the importance of trans-discplinary perspectives that are based in other fields to enhance understanding of the effects of racism and other forms of discrimination.

For the purpose of this dissertation my aim is to present and analyze Hip Hop

pioneers' lived experiences toward the end of fostering a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural practices of the art form. Solórzano and Yosso's tenet of centralizing experiential knowledge as a critical challenge to dominant norms is incorporated in the case of the Architects of Hip Hop counternarratives. A critical race methodology in education challenges White privilege, rejects notions of "neutral" research or "objective" researchers, and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26; Delgado Bernal, 1998). As such, the narratives as told by Hip Hop's pioneers serve as an illustration of the historical accounts that coincide with the musical practices demonstrated in the Hip Hop pedagogy currently being developed[10]. Norman (1991) cites MacIntyre's (1979) use of narrative structure in relation to experience. MacIntyre notes:

> It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of the narratives we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told—except in the case of fiction…What I have called a history is an enacted dramatic narrative in which the characters are also the authors (Norman, 1991, p. 123; MacIntyre, 1979).

Within the context of this study methodologies were extended to include an 'ethno' musicological point of view. "Related to anthropology (Merriam, 1964), an ethnomusicological perspective recognizes the contributions of all musical traditions. From this perspective, musical traditions are viewed as one would view visual arts, architectural styles, or histories across groups of people; not hierarchically valued as any one cultural group might perceive them, but each one having value as a tradition of music-making"

[10] Here I make reference to the National Standards for Music Education in the United States. The national standards are generally divided into classifications: Musical Skills and Musical Knowledge. For example, in studying 18th century counterpoint one would be exposed to Bach's musical examples as well as the history associated with his life and times. Developing a music pedagogy that infuses Hip Hop requires an in depth knowledge of the genre's artisans and history in addition to its performance practice.

(Lundquist and Sims 1996, p. 314). I have collected and reviewed a series of texts and media representations that give rise to a majoritarian perspective of Hip Hop. This majoritarian perspective, as I point out, further serves as a dysconscious mis-representation of Hip Hop. Dysconsciousness is an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given (King, 1991, p. 135). As such, it (the majoritarian view) reifies historical notions of 'Blackness' as inferior and culturally deficient[11]. The counter-stories as presented, "shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). King further explains that:

> Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the *absence* of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but an *impaired* consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. Uncritical ways of thinking about racial inequity accept certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages White people have as a result of subordinating diverse others (Wellman, 1977). Any serious challenge to the status quo that calls this racial privilege into question inevitably challenges the self-identity of White people who have internalized these ideological justifications (p. 135).

In challenging the dominant discourse, the Architects' experiences and point of view provide an educative context of the cultural and historical significance of Hip Hop. The concept of educative posits the notion that the individual subjects of inquiry have a "legitimacy and authority to produce socially useful knowledge" (Hytten, 2004, p.101). To develop a socially useful knowledge of the subject, I analyzed data from the Architects of Hip Hop series and artists' lyrics to construct counter-narratives to the assumptions as identified within the majoritarian story.

[11] Calmore (1995) asserts as many whites experience competitive advantage and relative prosperity over blacks, they are encouraged to believe in an imagined cultural superiority that, in turn reinforces conviction…that our blackness is a condition from which we must be liberated (p. 315).

Qualitative Research

In effort to construct a counter-narrative of Hip Hop, qualitative research methodology is essential to this dissertation. Qualitative research seeks to understand the social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved, to contextualize issues in theory particular social-cultural milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions (Glesne 2006, p. 4). Further, qualitative research investigates poorly understood territories of human interaction (Glesne 2006, p. 211). Agreeing with Elliott (1995) and Dorrell (2004), I contend that music, and therefore musicing, is a part of an aesthetic human interaction that is an evolutionary process of something people do. The attempt is to bring to the forefront the misunderstandings of the musicians and musical history from those who are considered 'on', or to some extent, 'outside' the margins. The task at hand was to look into the lives of these individuals to find the 'stories to be told'.

Collection and Analysis of Narratives

There is no single right way to analyze qualitative data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 2). Raw data used in this study was taken from accounts of CNN's Paula Zahn NOW and a documentary series titled The Architects of Hip Hop. In the case of Paula Zahn, I acquired a transcript of the original taped broadcast from CNN's online transcript database. After downloading the transcription I proceeded to read the given text while simultaneously watching the taped broadcast. In doing this, it was my desire to acquire a more in-depth perspective—inclusive of body language, facial expressions and surrounding environment of the various respondents' commentary. I note that fashioning a majoritarian perspective, using Paula Zahn, involved a manipulation and management of data not as an end in and of

itself—but rather to present "aspects of the broader task of theorizing and contributing to the disciplinary knowledge of the social sciences" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 16). The resulting majoritarian perspective involved a process of analysis which Dey (1993) posits as describing, classifying, and connecting (cited in Coffey & Atkinson, p. 8). In describing Zahn's position of Hip Hop as art or poison, careful attention was given to "the context of action, the intentions of the social actor, and the processes in which the social action is embedded" (Coffey & Atkinson, p. 8). I then re-read the transcript to analyze the conversations that resulted in the emerging majoritarian story.

In the case of the Architects of Hip Hop the data used were derived from a series of taped interviews as well as written accounts of the Hip Hop pioneers' experiences. Christopher "Play" Martin conducted the interviews at a time and place of the participants' choice. Each interview lasted between 25-55 minutes. Christopher generated a list of interview questions that he allowed me to attach in Appendix B of this dissertation. Electronic files of the interviews were shared with me once all interviews were collected. I then listened to the electronic files several times to gain an understanding of each participant's positionality on Hip Hop. In short, I discovered as a result of Christopher's "insider privilege", the interviews in the Architects of Hip Hop series flowed more like a conversation among friends unlike the journalistic undertones of Paula Zahn NOW. This allowed me to construct a rich narrative based on the lives of the four architects selected for this dissertation. After I transcribed the interviews I coded the text for themes that would engage a variety of audiences. Incorporating ethnographic methods, I analyzed these texts utilizing formal narrative analysis as posited by Coffey and Atkinson (1996). Narratives, according to Coffey and Atkinson, have rather specific, distinct structures with formal and

identifiable properties (p. 57). "Narratives allow people to tell the stories of their storied lives" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2005, p. 429). Concurring with John Dewey (1938) that the ultimate aim of research is the study of human experience, Clandinin & Connelly (2000) make a good case for narrative as epistemological stance, research methodology, and scholarly discourse—all uniquely capable of "getting at" the content of human lives. Narrative, they argue, captures and investigates experiences as human beings live them in time, in space, in person, and in relationship.

I used Labov's (1972, 1982) model, as outlined by Coffey and Atkinson to "identify how the participant tells their story the way they do: how the participant gives the events that recount shape; how the participant makes a point; how the participant 'packages' the narrated events and their reaction to them, and how the participant articulates their narrative with the audience or audiences that hear them (p.58)."

A major component of analyzing the forms and functions of both sets of data involved identifying relevant concepts and pervasive themes. This process involved taking a slightly less systematic and structured approach to narrative analysis, deriving more context-dependent infrastructure and focus to explain the effect (intended or unintended, implicit or explicit) of the story or tale (Coffey & Atkinson, p. 62). Throughout the course of my analysis a major challenge was to not use the Architect's story as a response to Paula Zahn. As Ikemoto (1997) points out, "By responding only to the standard story, we let it dominate the discourse" (p. 136).

Analysis, according to Coffey & Atkinson, is not "the last phase of the research process. It should be seen as part of the research design and of the data collection" (p. 6). In classic praxial form I was informed by not only the raw data but the analysis of these data as

well. It was a process of constant reflection and action. In reviewing and coding the majoritarian and architects story I looked for absences, differences, similarities and other elements that were present that I had not previously anticipated within the context of the texts. Transcripts were coded for themes that were ultimately used in the 'constructed' narratives of the architects and majoritarian accounts. Most fundamentally, analysis is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena (Coffey and Atkinson, p. 108). The constructed narratives are the formative culminating account of the storyteller's lived experiences against the majoritarian perspective[12].

Using Secondary Data

The use of secondary data in educational research can present strengths and limitations. Secondary analysis involves "the re-analysis of data for the purpose of answering the original research question with *better* statistical techniques or answering new questions with old data" (Glass, 1976, p. 3; as cited in Burstein, 1978, p. 10, emphasis added). Burstein further posits secondary analysis can contribute to knowledge because it has the potential to consider important questions without some of the limitations, or with a different set of limitations, than those encountered in the original investigation (p. 10). For the purposes of this study my aim is to use the secondary data to develop a majoritarian perspective of Hip Hop and ascertain insight to the lives of the individuals who were instrumental in the development of Hip Hop. As such, this work takes on Thomson, Bzdel, Golden-Biddle, Reay & Estabrooks' belief that "qualitative data can be compared

[12] The term storyteller is employed synonymously as Jay's (2006) use of the term 'speaker'. In her critique of the interviewer/interviewee power relationship, Jay posits the word interviewee sounds as though they are having the interview "done" to them. She chooses the term 'speaker' to "invoke the power of the speaker to speak his or her own truths in a dialogue" (p. 53).

with other data sources or be used to provide comparison with other contexts, over other periods of time, and across other social groups and cultures" (2005, 4.2).

This said, there were some distinct limitations in using the given data. Because an external party previously captured the interviews, I was limited by the inability to offer probes for more information. That lack of presence on my behalf presented a disconnect in capturing non-verbal cues and communication for overall sense of a persons style which is important to construct a rich narrative of each character in the counterstories. Despite these limitations, the secondary data employed in this study provided a good baseline for drawing assumptions and conclusions that provide historical contexts in the developing Hip Hop music curriculum. As a form of member checking, the constructed narratives of the architects were given to Christopher "Play" Martin who then reviewed the textual contents for accuracy. During this process, Christopher read the transcribed and edited representations of the architects' interviews. Upon completion, the architects' chapter it was submitted in its entirety to Christopher for a final review of narrative content and form.

Role of the Researcher

"Who is this man asking me questions?" I often wondered if the individuals who were participants of qualitative research asked this question while being interviewed. To answer this important line of inquiry, I draw from a character in the movie *Brown Sugar. Brown Sugar* has been heralded as an iconic Hip Hop film. The main storyline chronicles the life of Sydney Shaw, a young reporter who recently becomes the editor of XXL Magazine, a monthly periodical of Hip Hop music and culture. Ms. Shaw begins all of her interviews the same way. "So when did you fall in love with Hip Hop?" For me it was the day I heard LL

Cool J's *I Can't Live Without My Radio*. It was 1986, I can recall that pounding track (music) with LL singing the hook, "I can't live without my radio". I took the tape from a cousin of mine. Most parents weren't into Hip Hop so youngsters had to either steal it or get it through older teenage relatives. The album cover had the words LL Cool J with a huge picture of a radio or boom box. Just writing about it takes me back. I can hear LL spittin' (reciting) those rhymes,

> Just stimulated by the beat, bust out the rhyme
> Get fresh batteries if it won't rewind…
> I'm the leader of the show, keepin' you on the go
> But I know I can't live without my radio

Ahh…that feeling was incomparable. The flow, the beat—that indescribable experience was just what I needed. The 'radio' offered a metaphoric euphoria to the ills of impoverished life. It was something all youth could relate to. The 'radio' became that inanimate friend—a place of emblematic solitude and refuge. Metaphors, according to Buendia (2003), "are discourses coveted from elsewhere that we use as a stand-in—or as a description—for explaining and/or interpreting another thing" (p. 54).

I definitely identify as a product of Hip Hop culture. A product of early Hip Hop culture, not the derogatory imaging and lyrics we see today in the media. I grew up in South Florida, so I am in a sense, an outsider to most of the Architects who grew up in Bronx, NY (Hip Hop's origin). Growing up in south Florida I lived in what an urban dweller would refer to as the suburbs. I don't have an inner city frame of reference, although I do have a reference of living under not so favorable financial conditions. My grandmother has clearly let me know that I was poor… black and poor.

As an educator and doctoral student I am definitely an outsider. As a music educator

trained in the canon, I represent the system of education that turned its back on the inner city youth of New York by taking away its arts programming. As a doctoral student I represent both the old guard that aims to protect its ideologies as well as novel ways of knowing and viewing education that challenge the status quo (i.e. PhD in Education-Culture, Curriculum & Change). In talking to some of the pioneers of Hip Hop there is some hesitation for such an undertaking (use of Hip Hop as pedagogy). In fact, Kurtis Blow, the first rap artist to have a major recording contract said, they (old school Hip Hop artists) look at the recent move of Hip Hop classes and programs and engage with caution. They have seen what the music industry has done to the art form. I can only imagine that there is some fear of being essentialized in the process. For that reason my aim is to look at Hip Hop in both its simplicity and complexity and see what can be learned from its culture and what its pioneers have to say about life, poverty, success, failure, and hope. My thoughts are that if channeled correctly it can indeed serve as a tool in education. The narratives as exemplified in the Architects of Hip Hop story serve as a means of providing "a different understanding of reality, but also as a means of opening up possibilities for understanding this reality in new and fundamentally different ways" (Lopez, 2003, p.76).

Wolf (1982) notes that all societies are 'in history', and that they should be allowed their own histories. In pursuing the work of this dissertation it is my desire to re-present the Architects of Hip Hop's history in and on their terms. It is my intent to provide the music educator with a historical perspective of Hip Hop that begins to open up the possibilities about what is taught in the musical classroom. In adopting methodologies that infuse multicultural ways of knowing into the classroom I have found it challenging when attempting to gain support from fellow colleagues. The following chapter demonstrates the

dominant culture's challenge to Wolf's assumption of all societies being 'in history'. Although I agree with Wolf, my argument contends that within the dominant society there is an established dichotomy that presents a socially constructed reality where people of color are represented as sub-standard and lacking in culture. I further explore how a 'system of representation' reifies common sensical thinking as a means of maintaining the 'status quo'.

What follows is an illustration of my experiences and the opposition faced in developing an educational Hip Hop program. The purpose of the chapter is to illuminate an adversarial position to a Hip Hop pedagogy while offering a plausible response to this positionality.

Chapter 4

Who's House: Representin' Hip Hop

> *The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles*[13]*. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation.*
>
> Debord (2004, p. 12)

As mentioned in my introduction, I received an overwhelming negative critique of embarking on an academic study and programming in Hip Hop. However, I did have one departmental ally. This was a white woman who was trained as a classical pianist and musicologist. She offered to co-teach the Hip Hop course. To this day I'm not sure if she supported the idea because she believed in it or because the Chancellor supported it and this could possibly bring some recognition to her. Whatever her motivations, I am ever thankful that she engaged the fight and endured through the personal and professional narrow-mindedness of our colleagues. I can recall two distinct instances of overt dissatisfaction with my efforts to develop a Hip Hop program at the university.

During our annual departmental end of the year faculty retreat, many of my music colleagues expressed how they felt about the Hip Hop Initiative project. One individual commented, "Do we really want our department associated with Hip Hop?" This comment in particular struck a dissonant chord with me, as if the cultural study of world musics,

[13] The SPECTACLE is NOT a collection of images; rather it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images (Debord, 1995, p. 12).

including popular music was something new to higher education. His sentiments of adopting Hip Hop as a study at the expense of the pursuit of 'real' music like opera illustrate the dichotomy within music education that I had hoped to dissolve[14]. During that same meeting, another faculty made a crass joke about my departmental ally. Paraphrasing, he said, "So… now that you're teaching the Hip Hop class we don't have to call you Dr. Brown. We'll just call you 'Brown Baby Love' from now on".

The second incident involved a tenured history professor who commented about an article in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* that featured the Hip Hop Initiative at NCCU. "What's the world coming to", the professor proclaimed, "got the Chancellor taking pictures with Hip Hop guys in front of the statue." This statement was monumental considering the statue in the center of campus is the university founder, James E. Shepard. Below is a copy of the photo as it appeared in the October 2006 issue. As a graduate of the university he was outraged. Putting this into a representational context I'm most certain that it was the image of the founder, chancellor, and Hip Hop artists (from L to R in above photo, 9th Wonder, Kurtis Blow, and Christopher "Play" Martin) that offended him. Why was he offended? To answer this question as well as the original inquiry it is necessary to develop an understanding of the underlying constructs being referred to here. Additionally, I will offer a plausible means of understanding how and why some of my colleagues (educated Blacks) have turned their backs on Hip Hop in general, as well as its academic pursuits.

[14] Here I am referring to the traditional methods in music education, as discussed in Chapter 2, that espouse the classics of European art as the basis for learning in the classroom.

Fictive Kinship

Woodson (1933) posits that "the 'educated Negroes' have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin, and the Teuton and to despise the African" (p. 1). For Blacks, this adoption or meshing of worlds presents the individual with a duality of consciousness. It is this double consciousness that has kept us in a state of cultural paradox. On one end seeking the freedoms given to us in the ever so famous "We (them) the people" and on the other end usurping pseudo-hegemonic forces on the uneducated Black masses. Signithia Fordham's use of the concept of "fictive kinship" is most apropos in further explaining my notion of the cultural paradox. "It [fictive kinship] refers to a kinship-like connection between and among persons in a society, not related by blood or marriage, who have maintained essential reciprocal social or economic relationships. The term conveys a sense of "brotherhood" and "sisterhood" of *all* Black Americans; thus a sense of people hood or collective social identity (Fordham, 1988, p. 56).

It is my belief that one rationale for the disavowing of Hip-Hop by educated Blacks is that by nature of the fictive kinship relationship they become associated with the images they so adamantly detest. Imagine a black professional in a corporate environment being greeted with a 'wuz up homie' salutation by his white counterpart. In a fit of rage this black professional vows to overtly disassociate with anything connected with Hip Hop culture. He then, in strict conformity, adopts more of the dominant society's ethos to prove he's not one of them (other blacks) and that he has worked hard to achieve his current socio-economic status. Fordham makes note that one can be Black in color, but choose not to seek membership in the fictive kinship system. She further illustrates that one can also be denied

membership by the group because one's behavior, attitudes, and activities are perceived as being at variance with those thought to be appropriate…and serve to delineate "us" from "them" (p. 56).

The representational aspects of fictive kinship's "us" from "them" paradigm further illustrate what Hall (1997) refers to as symbolic boundaries. Symbolic boundaries keep the categories 'pure', giving cultures their unique meaning and identity. What unsettles culture is 'matter of out of place' – the breaking of our unwritten rules and codes (Hall, 1997, p. 236). As a point of reference I will recount the scientific method(s) as discussed in chapter two wherein 'Blackness' was associated with savagery, lacking in culture and the uneducated. As a means to dispel this majoritarian perspective, educated Blacks sought to create alternative images that would present Blackness through a new 'cultured' and 'educated' lens. The dilemma that arose out of this thought fostered an attitude where educated Blacks began to look at themselves in a hierarchal contrast to lesser educated Blacks. The concept of "us" from "them", as illustrated in the 'wuz up homie' example is not something new to Black culture. In fact, E. Franklin Frazier's landmark text *Black Bourgeoisie* points out previous examples of this same concept as well as a probable cause for what he identifies as the Black inferiority complex. The Black Bourgeoisie, as Frazier (1957) posits, "suffered spiritually not only because they were affected by ideas concerning Negro's inferiority, but perhaps even more because they had adopted the white man's values and patterns of behavior" (p.146-7). As I move forward, I will identify the ways language and meaning form the basis of one's epistemological frame of reference. I further maintain that the misconceptions and ideological constraints that my colleagues have placed on the notion of a Hip Hop curriculum falls directly in line with historic hegemonic modes of production.

Althusser (1971) posits that the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so they too, will provide for the dominant of the ruling class 'in words' (p. 132-133). The words or commentary, as presented by my colleagues further embodies the notion that they are merely 'players' on the world's stage. Their role, as they so carefully act out, is a continuation of the state's highly developed tightly knit system that employs representations of reality in a strategic position that seeks to secure its existence.

A Theory of Representation

The notion of representation deals with the interconnections of meaning and language. More specifically, representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language (Hall, 1997, p. 17). The application of 'the mind' in Hall's definition carries undertones that suggest a meaningful relationship with imagery. Foucault (1972), according to Hall (1997) suggests that, "nothing has meaning outside of discourse" (p. 45). In this manner, a relational process of 'identifying' is fashioned based on a set of prescribed beliefs. In turn, those prior beliefs or frames of reference form a being's conscious state of mind. "There is no consciousness without language, for language is the real practical consciousness, which exists for other human beings, and hence for beings that have become conscious" (Lefebvre, 1968, p.64). To have existence in the social world, objects must be identified. Therefore, it is the identification and naming of an object that bring with it a sense of meaning. One may suggest the notion of *right vs. wrong*. Here, there is a binary or pole of

opposition present that makes the case for what is right. To be right (or understand what is right) you must know (or understand) what is wrong. Meaning making associated with this kind of thinking is created in what Stuart Hall (1997) sees as a combination of language (what one says) and practice (what one does). This arrangement of language and practice serves as a basis for 'typing' otherness. Dyer (1977) argues that without the use of *types*, it would be difficult if not impossible, to make sense of the world. Let us examine for a moment at the use of images and discourse in creating meaning. According to Hall (1997) "we understand the world by referring individual objects, people or events in our heads to the general classificatory schemes into which—according to our culture—they fit" (p. 257). Hall further points out "we come to 'know' something about a person by thinking about the roles which he or she performs (p. 257). In broad terms, then, 'a *type* is any simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characterization in which a few traits are foregrounded and change or "development" is kept to a minimum' (Dyer, 1977, p. 28; Hall, 1997, p. 257). The following section gazes at various images of Hip Hop and the overt presence of a dichotomy that seeks to present its reality in a right vs. wrong typology resulting in what is known in the media as stereotypical Hip Hop[15].

Media Control: Willie Lynch is in the house

The previously held misconceptions about Hip Hop, by my colleagues, is a classic example of the 'black crab syndrome'. The black crab syndrome refers to the way people intentionally bring each other down just as the caged black crabs do when one attempts to exit the confines of their inhabitance. Fueled by constructs of racism, the black crab

[15] The term 'stereotypical' refers to strategies of *splitting* that divide the normal and acceptable from the abnormal and unacceptable (Hall, 1997, p 258). These strategies make use of simple and exaggerated fixations of 'types' to eternalize differences.

syndrome serves as a means of control and subjugation for those who wish to improve their conditions. Marable (1992) defines racism as "a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Amercians, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (p. 5).

In a 2003 article in The Nassau Guardian, Craig F. Butler outlines a reasonable cause for the development of the black crab syndrome. In the article, Butler draws from an address by Willie Lynch, a British slave owner, delivered in 1712. In his address, Lynch states:

> In my bag here, I have a fool proof method for controlling your Black slaves. I guarantee everyone of you that if installed correctly it will control the slaves for at least 300 years. My method is simple. Any member of your family or your overseer can use it.
>
> I have outlined a number of differences among the slaves and I take these differences and make them bigger. I use fear, distrust, and envy for control purposes…
>
> Now that you have a list of supreme vision, differences I shall give you an outline of action-but before that I shall assure you that distrust is stronger than trust and envy is stronger than adulation, respect, or admiration. The Black slave, after receiving this indoctrination shall carry on and will become self-refueling and self-generating for hundreds of years, maybe thousands.
>
> They must love, respect, and trust only us.

Historically, racism has been viewed via a white/black dichotomy. White racism (or White supremacy), as Sleeter (1994) posits, refers to the system of rules, procedures, and tacit beliefs that result in Whites collectively maintaining control over the wealth and power of the nation and the world (p. 6). It is important to note the previous illustration of Marable's definition of racism that shifts to include "multiple faces, voices, and experiences" within the racist paradigm (Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000, p. 61). Let's be clear. I am not arguing that Whites or other European groups are not racist. Indeed some of them have been, which is clearly identified in Lynch's address. I also note that there are Whites that have

served the interest of 'others' as allies in various social justice causes over time. What I am suggesting is that the ideology of racism has transcended far beyond the white/black binary and that racist behaviors can in fact operate through the various ethnicities and cultures it seeks to disenfranchise. The better and more sophisticated the manipulation, the less aware of it we are (Rushkoff, 1999, p. 2).

I was recently watching an episode of Bill Maher on HBO (Home Box Office pay channel). Maher commented that "a great percentage of Hip Hop was affirmative action for the ego and it was about shoot this and pimp that". He also mentioned that 'other' people didn't feel the need to let everybody know how much money they had. Assuming that he was talking about white people or non-people of color, I can only imagine on what foundation Mr. Maher's statement lay. Living in a capitalist society, money and power are inextricably intertwined. One may not outright profess their mass riches the way Hip Hop artists throw large sums of cash in the air or ride around in $300,000 Bentleys, however, one may covertly proclaim one's wealth through the use or ability to manipulate one's power. Power, it seems, has to be understood here, not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way—within a certain 'regime of representation' (Hall, 1997, p. 259). I posit that one of the ultimate displays of power is the ability to control what is included in the story of the making of a nation. It was in *1984* that George Orwell (1950) suggested; he who controls the past controls the future. I maintain that controlling the past involves a careful manipulation of how that past is represented and interpreted. Michael Eric Dyson's response to Bill Maher was directly in line with my thesis. Dyson illustrated the overwhelming production of various texts that exist on George Washington, Abraham

Lincoln, Aaron Burr and others. He (Dyson) further noted that Aaron Burr died in a duel. Every history book I ever read on him notes this as well. The Boston Tea Party, as a second illustration, was a concrete example of rebellion in action. However, violence and disregard for authority (the law) are qualities intrinsic to Hip Hop and there are no references to this in the making of America? On the contrary, these qualities are as American as the 'Stars and Stripes'.

Another example of the continuation of the cultural deficit and inferiority paradox is evidenced in the minority-majoritatian perspective of Kedi Obi Awadu. Here I posit that this discussion of the negative imagery that represents Hip Hop serves as a continuation of control through the methods of stereotyping. In his writings, Awadu (1996) exposes what he believes to be 12 recurring negative themes within Hip Hop music videos. For the sake of my argument I will focus on the theme crass materialism. According to Awadu, crass materialism deals with the idea of just wanting to get paid evidenced through a glorification of expensive fashions, fancy mansions, materialism, and individualism. I would argue that yes, in the videos you see Hip Hop artists popping (uncorking) bottles of Cristal Champagne, driving $100,000 automobiles and supporting the image of living in a multi-million dollar estate. Here again, I suggest that this typology is not limited to the culture of Hip Hop.

Let me take you back to the 1980s. Regan was President of the United States of America. The country was deeply involved in the arms and space race. While all of this was going on politically, television depicted a certain imagery of success. Television shows like Dallas and Knots Landing projected classic representations of a wealthy American lifestyle. Oh and how can I forget the biggest exhibition of them all, Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous…with your host Robin Leach. Do you remember the tag line from this particular

show? It was “Champagne wishes and caviar dreams”. Crass materialism was the popular culture topic in White TV and in Hip Hop. This was the ‘American Dream’, which in ‘other’ people’s America, as Bill Maher refers to it is positive (right) but in Hip Hop it is negative (wrong). The result is a socially constructed reality where Hip Hop and Blackness continue to fall victim to the inferiority paradigm. Thus, ‘victims’ can be trapped by the stereotype, unconsciously confirming it by the very terms in which they try to oppose and resist it (Hall, 1997, p. 263). So, how does one effectively oppose hegemonic forces? The position offered here is a critical negation of the core ideologies that have stereotyped Hip Hop.

No idea could transcend the spectacle that exists—it could only transcend ideas that exist about the spectacle. For the society of the spectacle to be effectively destroyed, what is needed are people setting a practical force in motion (Debord, 2004, p. 143). As I continue I will argue that Hip Hop its creation and the impetus for its creation was a direct action—a practical force set in motion to dispel the harsh realities of urban live in post industrial America

Flip the script: Challenging the dominant reality

“Critical theory has to be communicated in its own language—the language of contradiction, dialectical in form as well as content. Not a negation of style, but the style of negation” (Debord, 2004, p. 144). The use and style of negation may take on various forms. Let us take for example the recent animated public service announcement (PSA) that was shown on BET (Black Entertainment Television). The PSA depicts a Hip Hop music video. The images are what appear to be a gangsta rapper and booty shaking girls in the

background. The artists' lyrics include… "Read a book. Read a book. Read a mutha fuckin' book!" and "Yo' body needs water, so drink that shit!" The lyrics and images represented in the video outraged the Black community. There were a number of talk shows on radio and TV that addressed this message. Many people I spoke with thought this was in poor taste and BET should immediately remove the ad from its programming. I went to 'You Tube' and watched the PSA as well as one of the major network morning shows that brought the artist and producer of the work in question on for commentary. The artist stated, and I paraphrase, "Our people don't read and they drink an overabundance of carbonated beverages that are not healthy. I was trying to reach them. It was satire". I was able to watch footage of a live performance of the read a book song. In the live show the artist, who by the way is a conscious poet ('not a rapper' as he professes) proceeds to perform a conscious piece on uplift of Black people. Shortly after he starts there is a pause in the music. The artist comments on the way, in general, that the masses don't want to hear more conscious rap. The music resumes followed by Read a book, Read a book, Read a mutha fuckin' book! The on-stage cast is jumping around and mimicking dances and expressions found in contemporary Hip Hop music videos. Our contemporary commentators (educated Blacks in particular), in their fit of rage could not even see the point of the whole charade. The read a book example serves as a classic exercise in detournement. The acknowledgement of uses of detournement in Hip Hop illustrate the intellectual capacity of Hip Hop artists and their awareness of the social and political ills facing their people—and the creative guise in which they operate. The distortions introduced in the detourned elements must be as simplified as possible, since the main impact of a detournement is directly related to the conscious or semiconscious recollection of the original (Debord & Wolfman, 1989). As such, in the case of 'Read a

Book', it was absolutely necessary to re-present the message on the importance of reading, drinking water and financial responsibility through the contexts of allusion and derision.

The difficulty in understanding the maneuvers of detournement is that in the spirit of being critically self-conscious it disregards the notion of common sensical thinking. I further posit that our notion of black culture is partly conceptualized from an oppressed foundation guarded by ideologies that form our psyche. It is my belief that the psyche or slave mentality that 'white is right' has kept us in a cultural paradox. The challenge as Smith (1998) exhibits is to develop an understanding of race and its functionality. In doing so, we begin to develop theories toward the end of further establishing new epistemological frames of reference that challenge status quo and common sense thinking. In Gramscian mode, Smith comments that

> Common sense is not critically self-conscious…It thrives on familiarity and fears change, and therefore common sense is profoundly conservative. Thus, paradoxically, those who wish to change the status quo must combat common sense and thereby risk acquiring the semblance of fools (p. 181).

As a result, many blinded by common sense are unable to decipher the messages that seek to illuminate and possibly dismantle the spectacle's coercive practices.

> The automation of coercive practices is a threat more menacing than any sort of human manipulators. For unlike with real human interaction, the coercer himself is nowhere to be found. There is no man behind the curtain. He has become invisible (Rushkoff, 1999, p. 13).

The next two chapters present Hip Hop through two points of view. The first example is an episode of Paula Zahn NOW where the main question presented is, Hip Hop: is it art or poison? The second example follows commentary from individuals who are considered to be founders of Hip Hop. In both cases my desire is to present the data through a critical lens.

The thought is to explore how the stories and their presentation convey a 'meaning' of Hip Hop. The main point, according to Hall (1997), "is that meaning does not inhere *in* things, in the world. It is constructed, produced. It is the result of a signifying practice—a practice that *produces* meaning, that *makes thing mean"* (p. 24).

Chapter 5

Hip Hop: Art or Poison?

> *The last and probably most debilitating effect of media propaganda is that it intentionally misrepresents reality.*
>
> Rushkoff (1996, p. 24)

Media Hegemony

The practice of signifying to create meaning is nothing new in the media. In fact, to a large extent media's hegemony relies on the public's acceptance of the ideologies posited by the educated and 'so-called' enlightened few. In mass communication and cultural studies this concept is commonly referred to as media hegemony. Gramsci (1971) defines media hegemony as "the dominance of a certain way of life and thought and to the way in which that dominant concept of reality is diffused throughout public as well as private dimensions of social life" (Altheide, 1984, p. 477).

As an example of media hegemony the majoritarian story found within Paula Zahn not only reifies racial privilege and dominance, it also serves as a form of "natural or normative points of reference" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). Throughout this chapter, I explore what Real (1980) refers to as "the effectiveness of symbols…in reference to the ability of transmitted symbols to influence human lives (p. 240). As an extension of media hegemony, my commentary and analysis of the Zahn segment incorporates the ways "journalists tend to cover topics and present news reports which are conservative and

supportive of the status quo" (Altheide, 1984, p. 478). One enduring concern in affirming the status quo is "the power" of mass media, and in particular their roles as vehicles of culture (Spitulnik, 1993, p. 294). As Hall (1977) argued:

> [The mass media] have progressively *colonized* the cultural and ideological sphere. As social groups and classes live...increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible (a) for providing the basis on which groups construct an 'image' of the lives, meanings, practices, and values of *other* groups and classes; (b) for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality, composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces, can be coherently grasped as a *'whole'* (p. 340; f, 1993, p. 295).

Just as in the early days of propaganda, today the media operates via a systematic approach of manufacturing public consent. The desire is to not only gain influence among the non-educated masses, "but more crucially they wanted to control the thought of the more intelligent members of the community in the United States, who would then disseminate the propaganda…And it taught a lesson: State propaganda, when supported by the educated classes and when no deviation is permitted from it, can have a big effect." (Chomsky, 2002, p. 13).

As I have argued earlier, historically the dominant class in American society has sought to control people of color by way of positing ideologies of genetic inferiority and cultural deficiency, my claim that in the case of the majoritarian perspective, and the question at hand—Hip Hop: Is it art or poison, we must take a careful look at the system in which Paula Zahn interacts. Paula Zahn NOW, which first aired in the spring of 2003 has amassed an average audience of 558,000 viewers each weeknight, according to Nielsen Media Research (Steinberg, 2007). As a 'forum' formatted media show, Zahn "calls upon the intelligence of its viewers and participants" to construct meaning (Rushkoff, 1996, p. 65).

> The episode of Paula Zahn in question begins with the following opening statement.
>
> Here's a heads-up right off the top: We're dealing with a very **provocative** subject tonight, and you might be **troubled** by some of the **words** and **images**. Hi, everyone. I'm Paula Zahn. Thanks so much for joining us.
>
> We are going **in-depth** on one of the most **controversial** forms of expression in America today. Hip-hop is huge. More than just rap music, it's a lifestyle, and just happens to be a multibillion-dollar industry. Tonight, we're going to explore the question: **Is hip-hop art or poison?** (my emphasis)

I find it interesting how Zahn begins this broadcast. The words 'provocative' and 'troubled' introduce the audience to the telecast through a negative discourse. In my initial analysis, I note that Hip Hop is presented via a dichotomy of Art or Poison. In developing a framework for review of what I am referring to as a majoritarian perspective, I once again call upon the notion of symbolic boundaries and how the classifying terms 'Art' and 'Poison' "gain meaning when they are read in context, against or in connection with one another" (Hall, 1997, p. 232). As the episode continues Zahn mentions the fact that Hip Hop's artistic beginnings served as an exposition of the difficulty of living in inner city New York in the early 1970s. Nonetheless, the conversation quickly shifts—focusing on the negative aspects of Hip Hop as represented in the media. Using terms like 'infultrating' and 'explicit', Zahn illustrates her positionality in situating the negative impact that Hip Hop has on mainstream America.

> It started in the '70s in New York's South Bronx and exposed what life was really like on the streets. In the '80s, artists like Run DMC, the Beastie Boys and L.L. Cool J exploded on to the music scene and soon crossed over on to the pop charts.
>
> In the '90s, Tupac Shakur, Notorious B.I.G., and Jay-Z helped hip-hop go mainstream. Hip-hop's impact is undeniable, infiltrating not just music, but pop culture. Hip-hop today encompasses many styles, party rap, Gospel rap, socially conscious rap.

> It's a multibillion-dollar industry, accounting for one of every five records sold in America. Eighty percent of buyers are white.
>
> But the most explicit music is often what sells the best. And that's what gives hip-hop a bad rap. Some critics call it violent, materialistic, and exploitive of women. Others worry that it's lost its socially conscious message.

Zahn's use of language plays an important role in the perceived reality of Hip Hop as fundamentally 'different' or 'in-opposition' to American moral standards. Marking 'difference' leads us, symbolically, to close the ranks, shore up culture and to stigmatize and expel anything which is defined as impure, abnormal (Hall, 1997, p. 237). Hunter (1992) discusses differences between form and content, intellect and imagination, morality and the senses in interpreting aesthetic modes of production. Even though Hunter's argument centers on literary works of art his discussion is useful in articulating Zahn's use of sensationalized public difference and its effects on the masses. Hunter articulates further:

> The crucial role of this schema lies not in its theoretical relation to literature but in its practical role as a means of problematizing the intellectual conduct of the individual who reads literature. That this is so immediately becomes clear once we observe that any judgment regarding the content of work, its moral bearing, its "lack of form," and so on can be immediately converted into a symptom of aesthetic imbalance in the reader (p. 350).

In an effort to present an image of breaking the white/black and right/wrong binary Zahn calls in the expertise of Chuck D, one of Hip Hop's most vocal and socially and politically conscious MCs. Here Zahn is positioned as seeking to be inclusive of multiple voices with the story presented. Zahn poignantly states:

> I'm a mom. There are tons of parents out there like me, who are very concerned about what our kids are listening to. What kind of message are rappers sending them?

to which Chuck D responds:

> Well, they're saying a lot of different messages.
>
> I think the point is, is like Byron Hurt points out in his beautiful documentary, is the fact that a slim margin of it is being promoted and endorsed by corporations. I think the most important thing to look at this is that, if you look at rap music and say that, hey, it makes a lot of money, it's making a lot of money for whom?
>
> Already, statistics say 80 percent are white buyers, wherever that statistic comes from. But there's music executives, who don't live in the communities for which this music is made, that become unaccountable over the actions being promoted and placed into all of America, around the world.

Immediately, the episode shifts to the notion of Hip Hop promoting what Awadu (1996) refers as phallic symbolism, and the criminalization of youth. Sorlorzano and Yosso (2002) inform us that "the majoritarian story tells us that darker skin and poverty correlate with bad neighborhoods and bad schools" (p. 29). I found it interesting although not surprising that this stock story concept was ever present in the depiction of the following footage.

> Hip-hop is a multibillion-dollar-a-year industry rooted in music, clothing, jewelry, a whole lifestyle. It is a culture of extravagant and expensive consumption. And a lot of critics wonder whether envy of that lifestyle contributes to crime in America.

To further solidify the bad neighborhood/bad school phenomenon Zahn calls on the commentary of a professor of criminology at Johnson C. Smith University, a private HBCU in Charlotte, NC. The professor, who is white and what appears to be middle aged, serves as a knowledge construction agent further reifying the deficiency and inferiority epoch models espoused by early social science ideologies. She comments:

> Watch a hip-hop video, and people aren't just wearing expensive items. They're literally flashing cash in their hands. If you don't have legitimate

> access to that, it's only natural that you're going to do something that makes that accessible to you… to emulate their idols, some kids, too young and immature to make better decisions, break the law.

At this point the Zhan majoritarian story clearly adopts what Solórzano & Yosso (2002) call majoritatian methodology. Standard, majoritarian methodology relies on stock stereotypes that covertly and overtly link people of color, women of color, and poverty with "bad," while emphasizing that White, middle- to upper-class people embody all that is "good." (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 29). The methodology, as exemplified in the previous narrative is reifying in two ways: a) as a professor of criminology the statement has credible weight among the majority white listening audience as well as the highly educated and b) teaching at a Black university increases the significance of the generalized statements made about Black people. However, as Ikemoto (1997) and Solórzano & Yosso point out, "using 'standard formulae' majoritarian methods purport to be neutral and objective yet implicitly make assumptions according to negative stereotypes about people of color" (p. 29). Furthering this position I posit that the shock value of this methodology is often found in the examples as narrated by the majoritarian perspective.

> For example, when White middle-class people fall victim to violence in their own neighborhoods and their schools, the shock comes from the standard story: "How could this happen? This is a good neighborhood" or "We never thought this could happen here. This is a good school." The standard story implies that violent crimes such as these are unheard of in White middle-class communities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 29).

I posit that these stories, which consist of a series of events occurring overtime are a part of a 'meta-narrative' wherein "assumptions are made about good versus bad describes people of color and working-class people as less intelligent and irresponsible while depicting White

middle-class and upper-class people as just the opposite" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 29).

Events, as Gamson & Wolfsfeld (1993) explain, do not speak for themselves but must be woven into some larger story line or frame; they take on their meaning from the frame in which they are embedded (p. 117). As Zahn continues, the topic of violence in Hip Hop becomes a central focus of the broadcast. After returning from a commercial break, Zahn opens the next segment with the question, "why are so many rappers obsessed with violence?" This line of inquiry and subsequent responses illustrate the long and rich tradition of media and its power of communicating as a means of influencing behavior. Zahn's opening statement articulates a position by framing the discussion, yet does so in the guise of *informing* the public. The 'marginal voice' that follows, as represented by Michael Eric Dyson is forced to serve in a reactionary and defensive capacity, further reifying dominant ideology. For the purposes of clarity I have included the dialog in its entirety.

> ZAHN: Why are so many rappers obsessed with violence?
>
> DYSON: Well, America is a violent place. The frontier of America is all about violence. The founding of America is all about violence.
>
> We're in a war in Iraq right now. That's violence. So, when we look at hip-hop music, hip-hop is a reflection of and a reinforcement of prevailing values that are in a society where people have been denied access to economic security.
>
> But, also, we live in a culture where the glorification of violence happens every day, with America saying the best way to handle difference and to squash difficulties with another nation is to resort to war.
>
> So, to focus on hip-hop, to the exclusion of that, would be wrong. And, finally, Martin Luther King said this. The bombs in Vietnam explode back home. He said: I'm not going to speak out against the war in Vietnam unless I speak out against a war that is happening upon your poor young black people in America.
>
> Hip-hop at least expresses and articulates a resistance to that,

even as they capitulate to some of its worst features.

Dyson is clearly articulating a view that Hip Hop is situated within, and is therefore a part of an American ideology of violence. I posit that even if Dyson is able to win audience acceptance of this ideological paradox of Hip Hop being the exclusion to the normative beliefs of the masses of America—Zahn, in classic hegemonic mode elicits a counter move that presents a Black voice to echo the sentiments of Hip Hop's negative aspects. The previous narrative continues with Zahn posing a question to John McWhorter, Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute Center for Race and Ethnicity:

> ZAHN: Is that, John McWhorter, what you see in this degradation of women that we just saw in that last scene, a gun coming out of a pair of very tiny, tiny panties?
>
> MCWHORTER: No, I don't. And this has always been a violent country. And we have had a lot of wars. And there have always been very poor, very angry people. And the question, as always, is degree. We have never before, in this country, and never anywhere in the whole world during the 150,000 years of this species, ever had a music as mindlessly violent as a certain string of the music we are talking about.
>
> And the misogyny—again, degree—it's the degree of it that needs to be conversed about, and can't be tied directly just to the fact that we, unfortunately, have poor people and that we're at a war. Those conditions aren't new.

McWhorter's critique falls in line with what Solórzano & Yasso (2002) refer to as minority majoritarian storytelling. Throughout the Zahn episode the minority majoritarian concept plays a key role in the formulation of both implicit and explicit meaning. According to Spitulnik (1993) the central problem of media power lays in the location of meaning in the mass communication process. He argues that "the most pervasive paradigm of the mass communication process (and the dominant paradigm through the 1980s) has been the linear

model consisting of three discrete stages: message production, message transmission, and message reception" (p. 295). As I continue I will illustrate how the Paula Zahn majoritarian story follows, in strict format, the traditional communications process as identified in Spitulnik. I will articulate how the embedded aesthetic critique of Hip Hop lends itself to a message production organization that recapitulates a system of marginalization of people of color. As I conclude this chapter, I will offer a cumulative illustration of the use of 'forum media' as a source of ideological message transmission and reception.

The Aesthetic Critique

Art is defined as the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance. In reading this definition one may be inclined to think of Art in many ways. This somewhat vague definition immediately evokes questions: what is beautiful—who determines what is considered significant? In an attempt to understand the aesthetic critique present within the majoritatian story, I will dissect this definition a bit further. Historically artistic forms of representation are viewed as an aesthetic phenomenon. The term 'Aesthetics' was adopted at a time "when works of art were considered in Germany with regard to the feelings which they were calculated to evoke, such as the feelings of the agreeable and of wonder, the emotions of fear, pity and such like" (Hegel, [1886] 2006, p. 3). Hegel notes further the idea of beauty in works of art.

> In a word, the source of beautiful works of art is the free activity of the phantasy, which in its mere imaginings, is already freer than nature. Art has not only the whole riches of the forms of nature at command in all their manifold variations of appearance, but it is borne by the creative imagination beyond this whole sphere in the inexhaustible fertility of its own productiveness (p.8).

Zahn's positioning of the question is Hip Hop art or poison conveys a type of meaning that suggests that it has to be one or the other. And since 'the classics' are representative of art, by process of elimination Hip Hop must be poison. Hunter (1992) posits that aesthetics appears both to embody and forestall the unfolding of all that we might become (p. 349). My thoughts in conceptualizing the Art or Poison dichotomy of Hip Hop suggests "in abandoning the aesthetic critique of aesthetics we free ourselves for a quite different reflection on the limits of the aesthetic domain, by beginning to treat it as one of the 'contingencies that make us what we are'" (Hunter, 1992, p 349; Foucault, 1984, p. 46). This sentiment is clearly noted by Russell Simmons in the Zahn segment. Simmons, one of Hip Hop pioneers states, "We're a violent and oversexed country. That's our sad truth. And rappers are reflections of—sometimes reflections of our sad truth". Nonetheless, we are still faced with the positioning of representations that presents a forced concept of symbolic boundaries and binary poles of opposition between people of color and the dominant culture. As a media forum in operation Zahn "has catered itself to our culture's need for open debate and participation. It is a way for media to address the complex, chaotic nature of the postmodern experience and liberate itself from the obligation of providing simple answers or confirmations of already-held beliefs" (Rushkoff, 1996, p. 65). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argue "a majoritarian story is one that privileges Whites, men, the middle and/or upper class, and heterosexuals by naming these social locations as natural or normative points of reference" (p. 28). The fascinating argument as presented in Zahn questions the ethos of Hip Hop as homophobic. In transitioning to the next topic Zahn offers the following:

> Coming up in the next half hour of our "Out in the Open" special,
> word that some rappers throw at gays.
>
> "Out in the Open" tonight, hip-hop culture and whether it's art or poison.

> We've already looked at how rap music treats women. That's instantly obvious any time you even look at a few seconds of a rap video. But you may not realize that a recurring theme in many songs happens to be gay bashing, lyrics filled with anti-gay slurs that reveal a disturbing strain of homophobia in hip-hop culture.

The irony of these statements lies in the fact that Hip Hop, in perpetuating ideologies of heterosexual norms, actually reifies the majoritarian story. So, in a general sense Hip Hop is serving the interests of the dominant culture via a minority majoritarian narrative. These sentiments are articulated by the following statements in Zahn:

> It's about hypermasculinity. What we have done, unfortunately, is we have adopted the larger American homophobia and embraced it in our own culture, our own community, and exaggerated it to the point to where we have created false ideas of what masculinity is.
>
> The issue is not hip-hop, per se, putting out homophobic messages, though it does. It is a culture which is institutionally homophobic and heterosexist.
>
> We have a president who is affiliated with religious organizations and movements that believe that gay people are sick and need to be cured. I would suggest that is the bigger issue. And if that bleeds into hip-hop, we ought not be surprised. It doesn't excuse it, but we have to go back to the predicate of the problem.

I agree with Hall (1997) that meaning depends on the difference between opposites (p. 235). In further analyzing the Zahn episode I have interpreted that the art or poison dichotomy situates Hip Hop between binary poles of opposites that are intentionally left unanswered and undefined. In the end, the audience is left bewildered at the ambiguity and lack of a conclusive and definitive answer.

> That’s all there is in life. You may think in your own head that there’s got to be something more in life than this, but since you’re watching the tube alone you assume, I must be crazy…And since there is no organization permitted—that’s absolutely crucial—you never have a way of finding out whether you are crazy, and you just assume it, because it’s the natural thing to assume. So that’s the ideal. Great efforts are made to achieve that ideal (Chomsky, 2002, p. 27).

Things to make you say…Hmm

It is interesting to note that throughout the telecast there is no clearly identifiable definition of what art is. I posit that because of this lack of clarification the individual viewers of this broadcast invariably bring cultural biases of what art is in making a distinction themselves of the binary. Taking into account the methodologies and ideologies posited in traditional music education one can clearly see that even in the lack of overtly classifying—Hip Hop remains symbolically beyond the boundaries of 'Art'. It is also important to note that Paula Zahn NOW is a taped production. In comparison to live broadcasts the audience is at the mercy of the directorial and editorial process. Producing meaning depends on the practice of interpretation, and interpretation is sustained by us actively using the code (Hall, 1997, p. 62). The editorial process in tape and film requires the editor and /or director to manipulate a series of 'frames' to create a final product that will ultimately be viewed by an audience[16]. Gamson and Wolfsfeld, (1993) notes the complex character of media systems in creating meaning via the framing transaction.

> On the one hand, journalists play a central role in the construction of meaning; they choose a story line in reporting events, and media commentators develop arguments and images that support particular frames. News stories are put together out of raw happenings, and this necessarily means framing these happenings and giving them meaning (p. 118).

As such, the resulting transmission is biased to the extent that there is only a partial representation (a pre-coding) of the opinions of the guest commentators.

Hegel's (2006) designation of 'beautiful works of art' is inclusive of fantasy, creativity and imagination. It is no doubt that his conceptual definition and subsequent codification (meaning) was based on the music and other artistic representations of his time,

[16] Here I conceptualize a 'framing concept' that includes words (aural and in-print), music, still images and motion images.

which in the 19th century was centered on what we know today as the 'classics'. The issue, as noted in using the Zahn forum format as a method of aesthetic critique of Hip Hop, "the audience must evaluate the arguments in relationship to its own developing awareness about a particular issue (Rushkoff, 1996, p. 65). In the case of Hip Hop, my sentiments are that the mass audience that subscribes to Zahn is not equipped with the knowledge of the subject matter to make a sound decision of whether Hip Hop is indeed art or poison. This is the burden of a remarkable comment by Schiller (1968), "it is by no means always proof of formless in the work of art if it makes its effect solely through its contents; this may just as often be evidence of a lack of form in him who judges" (p. 158; Hunter, 1992, p. 350).

As meanings shift and slide, so inevitably the codes of a culture imperceptibly change (Hall, 1997, p. 62). The challenge, as we evolve, is to understand that art is a product of human interactions as embodied through acting, dancing, painting and musicing. The challenge as presented in Zahn is that "forum media, however sensationalized or tabloid it may get, depends upon the interpretive and evaluative skills of its audiences, even if it does not demand knowledge of facts or history" (Rushkoff, 1996, p. 65). However, as a classroom tool the Zahn episode can serve as a means to foster critical reflection and critique. Students engaged in a Hip Hop pedagogy may offer critical oral/written responses to the majoritarian perspective as presented in Zahn. To adequately perform this task in response to forum media format, the student and teacher must possess an adequate knowledge of the historical accounts of Hip Hop culture. The following chapter offers a perspective of Hip Hop through four of its pioneers' point of view. Their candid depictions of the early days of Hip Hop provide a historical base of actual events for the music educator with little to no formal knowledge of Hip Hop.

Chapter 6

The Architects of Hip Hop

> *We may not be able to fully comprehend specific thought patterns of another culture, but we have relatively less difficulty understanding a story coming from another culture, however exotic that culture may appear to us.*
>
> Hadyn White (1990, p. 1)

I used to love H.E.R.!

Hip Hop artist Common proclaimed, "I used to love H.E.R!", referring to his adoration of Hip Hop and the excitement garnered from experiencing a great rhyme over a tight beat. Erykah Badu called it "The love of my life", referring to the song who's title bears the same name which she also notes is an 'Ode to Hip Hop'. So what is this thing? This love—this Hip Hop. In the song, "I Used to lover H.E.R." (Lynn & Wilson, 1994, track 2) states:

> I met this girl, when I was ten years old
> And what I loved most she had so much soul
> She was old school, when I was just a shorty
> Never knew throughout my life she would be there for me
> On the regular, not a church girl she was secular
> Not about the money, no studs was mic checkin her
> But I respected her, she hit me in the heart
> A few new york niggaz, had did her in the park
> But she was there for me, and I was there for her
> Pull out a chair for her, turn on the air for her
> And just cool out, cool out and listen to her
> Sittin on a bone, wishin that I could do her
> Eventually if it was meant to be, then it would be
> Because we related, physically and mentally

> And she was fun then, I'd be geeked when she'd come around
> Slim was fresh yo, when she was underground
> Original, pure untampered and down sister
> Boy I tell ya, I miss her…

In 1994, Chicago born rapper, Common released *I Used to Love H.E.R.* Common uses an extended metaphor comparing his relationship with Hip Hop to that of a relationship with a woman. One may be inclined to believe that Common was actually comparing the degradation of women to the deterioration of Hip Hop. While problematic, Common's assessment and symbolism of an implied rape, "does highlight the gender dynamics associated with hip-hop discourse" (Neal, 1999, p. 165). Common's treatise on Hip Hop and its style of metaphoric comparison speaks of a love that is second to none. His words echo those exemplified in the writings of Martin Luther King. King, an advocate of love, often revealed the Greek's description of love. King's position, was to achieve a more spiritual *agape* sense of love that transcends the physical, "nothing sentimental or basically affectionate", nonetheless King's understanding of the Greek ideology of 'the affectionate' is most apropos here (1992, p. 22). King states:

> …the Greek talks about *philia. Philia* is a sort of intimate affectionateness between personal friends. It is a sort of reciprocal love. On this level a person loves because he is loved (p. 22).

For artists like Common, Hip Hop provided that solace—a place to rest—a place to love because you are loved.

The 1990s witnessed the battle for legitimacy amongst the East and West Coast Hip Hop artists. Afrocentric Hip Hop seemed to be on it's way out and gross materialism was slowly becoming the new norm. "Despite its intense commodification, hip-hop has managed to continuously subvert mass-market limitations by investing in its own philosophical groundings" (Neal, 1999, p. 137). The acronym, H.E.R. stands for Hip Hop in Essence is

Real and represented Common's attempt to challenge the commercial success of Hip Hop. Through his personification of Hip Hop, Common begins telling a story about his journey with Hip Hop. Similarly the stories as presented in this chapter represent what Neal (1999) refers to as "the last black popular form to be wholly derived from the experiences and texts of the black urban landscape" (p. 137).

Using the instrument of counterstorytelling, this dissertation provides an inquiry into the lives of Hip Hop artists during the creation and development of the art form. For the purposes of the counterstory, I have extracted narratives from the *Architects of Hip Hop* series as conceived by Christopher 'Play' Martin. These stories, as presented in this chapter, serve as a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian story. The Architects of Hip Hop "shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). As noted in the previous chapter, the Paula Zahn majoritarian story situates Hip Hop in a very interesting and unanswered dichotomy of 'art' or 'poison'. In the case of the Architects' stories, I once again note that it is not my intent to respond to the majoritarian viewpoint, but rather to present them as identifiable and legitimate accounts of Hip Hop's history. Histories, according to Norman (1991) must be seen, not as simple representations of what once was, but practically oriented attempts to reshape our effective recollection of the past (p. 128).

Geertz (1994), in adopting beliefs of Max Weber, subscribes to the notion "that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (p. 214). In situating the Architects narratives within a critical race paradigm it is my intent to impart a new sense of meaning of Hip Hop.

What results constitutes an ethnography of the people—their lives, communities, fears, hopes and dreams. In analyzing the texts there were several motifs that emerged. In carrying out several close readings of the lives of the four pioneers, I have identified characteristics, perceptions, and qualities intrinsic to Hip Hop in the following sub-themes.

- No clearly defined origin;
- Artists often experimented with various art forms before settling into one of the four elements of creative expression;
- The elements are viewed as distinct but their interaction resembles a "systems" model;
- Like art itself Hip Hop is fluid, which gives it the flexibility to evolve over time;
- Because it was just something they were 'doing' (i.e. musicing, dancing, drawing) generally there was no abstracted methodology;
- Innovation in process;
- Music was a reflection of 'good times';
- Practice to hone craft;
- Loss of balance;
- Too commercialized;
- Loss of meaning (music was about the struggle and hope);
- Motivation moved to extrinsic values (monetary);
- Stagnant and lazy (in need of redirection/change);
- Excitement (referring to its global positioning);
- Closeness among crews or posses;

- Identity Formation;
- Music as community and;
- Experiential life lessons

These sub-themes as gleaned from the stories are grounded in the following four major themes:

- Hip Hop as an evolving practice;
- Artistic and Aesthetic Integrity and;
- Critical Positionality (referring to the current and future state of Hip Hop)
- Community in action

The Architects

The story of the people of the African Diaspora articulates how one navigates through a process of invention and reconfiguration. The lessons learned from slavery formulated with the experiences of fighting oppression and racism illustrate several ways of knowing that have informed the artistic expression of Hip Hop's early pioneers. It is hard to imagine where we would be without Henry Hampton's poignant fourteen part documentary series, *Eyes on the Prize* or without Alex Haley inquiring about the life of Malcolm Little in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. These stories provide insight into the lives of real people and aid in our understanding of the social and political landscape in which they lived. In a personal conversation with Christopher "Play" Martin, he described why he chose the term "architect". For him, an architect represents a person with the initial idea who develops a plan for the way something ought to be built. Upon establishing the Hip Hop Initiative, one of the major areas of focus that former NCCU Chancellor, James H. Ammons wanted to

address was the lack of research and archival data on the history of Hip Hop. For me, The *Architects of Hip Hop* represents the Hip Hop Initiative's attempt to aid in the preservation of the stories about those who paved the way for this cultural movement. The thought behind the architects project was to identify artists who are considered pioneers of Hip Hop. As an artist and pioneer himself Christopher Martin is regarded as an authority on the subject. To identify participants, Mr. Martin consulted with a variety of individuals who were actively involved in the Hip Hop movement at its beginnings. The result was a list inclusive of twenty-five individuals. To gather participants, Christopher called, emailed, and used word of mouth to inform the Hip Hop community of the emerging 'architects' project. When completed, the overall Architects project will include 24 episodes that highlight DJs, MCs, B-Boys/Girls, and Graffitti writers. The individuals presented in this study are the artists Christopher has interviewed to date, who were willing to participate in the pilot episodes.. The architect's stories were distilled yet followed the general format of the original interview. The stories were placed in the following order to provide a greater flow of each individual's account and the commentary interspersed between each narrative.

First, Ron "Amen-Ra" Lawrence, this native of Queens New York was always passionate about the arts. He started off as a visual artist and eventually became an award-winning music producer. Next, Christopher "Play" Martin. "Play" was born and raised in Queens New York and started off as a b-boy. As a member of the rap duo Kid n' Play, he reached unprecedented success. Then there is Dana "Dana Dane" McCleese, also a New York native who was born in Queens but raised in Fort Greene Brooklyn. Most commonly known for his flashy, yet couture fashion sense and humorous lyrics, he began his career with the Kangol Crew. Finally, Cheryl "Salt" James Wray began rapping at the age of 19. She

reached the top of the charts performing with friend and band mate Sandra "Pepa" Denton. As the first female rap group to achieve the coveted Grammy® award (1994), Salt'n'Pepa paved the way for future female MCs.

As I described in a previous section, Hip Hop served as a voice for the voiceless. As the Architects describe their understanding of Hip Hop's impact on their lives, we gain insight into the lived experiences of those who were at the forefront of an emerging cultural movement.

Amen-Ra's Story

> *I'm from East Elmhurst Queens, New York. Home of Kid N' Play, Kwame, Eric B., Hurby Love Bug…all those guys. You know Malcolm X lived on that block too. Life was pleasant growing up in East Elmhurst. It was a close-nit friendly neighborhood. Everyone knew each other and most of us got along. We had lots of summer neighborhood events like block parties, house parties, and park jams.*
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> *I attended public schools in New York, P.S 148 from 1st to 2nd grade, P.S. 127 from 3rd to 6th grade, I.S. 145 from 7th to 8th grade, High School of Art and Design from 9th to 10th grade, and graduated from Bryant high school. Back in those days art was my thing. I doodled on pieces of paper ever since I can remember. So it wasn't hard for me to get accepted into Art and Design. I later transferred to Bryant High and found a niche for Architecture.*
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> *After I graduated high school I went to Howard University. That's where I met Puffy. He went along to start an internship with Uptown MCA records. We had a nice little talent show at homecoming, Puffy was doing his dance steps. That's how the whole Hitmen thing started. Puffy and I had a friendship, but my music spoke for itself. My music is all about the life of the party and making people feel good. I struggled with BadBoy for a good year because I had a whole different sound but I studied the sound to see how my music could fit in.*
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> *My first contact with Hip Hop was when I saw a bunch of hard rocks strolling into 127 park with b-bops and gangster leans. One had a box in his hand playing this song called Apache and it was almost like it was their theme music. It just seemed so cool to me. Them niggas was mad cool, they had the Kangols dip to the side they had the bop the swing, I was like "Yo, that's Hip Hop" but I didn't have the name for it. It felt like it was straight out of a Black exploitation movie and shit. I was mesmerized. I would later watch local rap groups that had an impact on the neighborhood youth. I definitely wanted to be down.*

I tried everything because I wanted to be a part of it. First I was a DJ, then I became a rapper, and then later a producer. Wardrobe and slang always played a big part before there was the music. All that stuff was Hip Hop. There was no name for it back then.

Amen Ra evolves and emerged, well you know how it is. It was all about rolling with the time. You know back when the high top fade was out, that was the style. You know with the movement and around that time the black power movement…
I was doing a lot of reading in college, Malcolm X was a big influence, P.E. (Public Enemy), X-Clan, so the name just kind of fit in with the times. Plus, you know it had a lot of meaning. It just stayed with me. Throughout out the 90s a lot of produces would use their middle names you know, Sean "P.Diddy" Combs.

When people tend to talk about Hip Hop, they say Hip Hop started in the Bronx. If you think about it, did Hip Hop start in the Bronx? Rap music may have started in the Bronx, but Hip Hop was always there. It's just that the music wasn't always there. I mean we were Hip Hop in Queens in the 70s as far as I can remember. If you want to say rap music started in the Bronx, then that's okay.

Hip Hop is a culture that has been here way before the music came about.
If you can go back to the early Super fly days, that was Hip Hop. The hood always had a fly dress code like hot leathers and quarter fields with slick talking slang from 'Jive turkey' to 'The Joint', to 'Fresh' to 'Dope' to 'Def' etc. Even look at the haircuts. Remember the afro's, the slick waves, the high top fades, the bald heads, now the braids and the dreds. Back then they had the mac daddy caddy, today we got the hot rims. It's a way of life and this is how some of us chose to express ourselves. If Rap music were to die, Hip Hop will still continue to be here.

There is no difference between Rap and Hip Hop. That has always been a joke to me. I hear people say MC Hammer is Rap and P.E. (Public Enemy) is Hip Hop, which is bullshit. Before there was the word Hip Hop there were records like Super Rappin, We Rap More Mellow, Rappers Delight, Christmas Rap etc. The word Hip Hop came later when they acknowledged it as an art. It only became Hip Hop until it became part of pop culture. If you go back to before songs were on wax, the word "hip hop" was not around.

So, I guess for me it's all about the artistic mind. I mean once you're an artist you are always an artist no matter what kind artist you decide you want to be. The whole idea is whether visual or just internal, its just in you. I mean as a kid I did martial arts and then I got into musical arts and if you really study a lot of artist you'll be surprised. You know Billy D (Williams) was a great artists, Kwame and Dana Dane went to performing arts. It's just a whole lot of other people that I could name. I think being an artist just gave me a sense of independence because going away from school I learned how to be on my own, how to handle my own place. I learned how to do things my mother always did. It pretty much helped me to grow up to be a man. I would say, "yeah", College and that life (music producer) helped me out to be the

individual to get more of a spiritual life.

> *As far as the current state of Hip Hop, well it's not happening. It's commercialized it's pimped out. The corporate world of music has watered it down. It's almost like how disco music used to be. Remember when disco music was funky, I didn't know it was disco then, I just knew it was hot. Disco was funky, but it got watered down after a while, it became too sing-songy, too happy, it just became too cheap and that was towards the end, to the point where it just fell off and died. I think Hip Hop is getting like that, now I'm not saying that Hip Hop is going to die. The music was about the fight and the struggle of what was going on, you know in people's environment. Now it, you know "where is the money?" Everyone is looking to get paid now and when you are looking to make money the same love is not in the music anymore the passion is not there. Now there are some albums I still like, for example I like a Kanye West. There is whole new vibe.*

Amen-Ra acknowledges that Hip Hop has moved away from its roots and has embraced a more commercial and uninviting representation of it self. When asked about the current state of Hip Hop he blatantly responded that "it sux!" Interestingly though his sentiments echoed those of Michael Eric Dyson (see Ch. 4, Representation). He understands that the presentation of the music and what gets played and sold is a bigger music industry issue. Amen-Ra further explains, *"If sex in Hip Hop sells then they are going to push it. If Gospel Hip Hop gets hot then they'll push that too. It all comes down to dollars and cents. They will always stereotype, can't get around it"*.

Today, Amen-Ra is considered one of the top producers in the music industry. With hits that include works with Mary J. Blige, Jay-Z, Luther Vandross, LL Cool J, MC Lyte and Aretha Franklin, with whom he won a Grammy®— Amen-Ra's musical repertoire is representative of a diverse African-American musical tradition. When asked about his music and what it represents, he replied, *"When you listen to my music it let's you know that I want everyone to have a good time. It's about the party for the most part."*

Play's Story

I was born and raised in Queens, N.Y. I was always was drawn to music and art. I pretty much taught myself how to draw as well as music was concerned too. I attended PS 127, then the High School of Art & Design. I was accepted to two other schools, Performing Arts High School and Music & Arts High School, but my family thought my (visual) artistic talent had a better future than the musician / guitarist I was at the time. I didn't finish there or at four other schools. I finally got a G.E.D.

There was a lot of pressure on me growing up. Especially in the streets when I got introduced to it—in regards to image and what people perceived of you. It seemed like even Queens itself had to always prove something to the other boroughs in New York. I believe when it was all said and done that ended up being its strength. Using that mind set as a warped inspiration to eventually do better than what you focused on wanting be.

I was introduced to Hip Hop in the neighborhood and then in high school. The clothes, the music, the girls! As I recall, there were several influences on the creation of Hip Hop, but the one that stands out the most was the voice of Keith Cowboy, Melle Mel, the name of Mr. Ness and the reverence New York had for Grand Master Flash & the Furious Five. I thought they were the ultimate. Mind you, their music was created through mere poor quality cassette tapes and when they finally made the record Super Rappin... "yoooo"!

I embrace the concept that Hip Hop is the culture, it's the lifestyle that includes all of the elements from rap, djaying, b-boying, etc. and rap is the music of the culture. It expands from rap to R&B to Hip Hop Soul, I think neo soul is a part of Hip Hop culture too. But you know what's so interesting? We are actually able to trace where the word "Hip Hop" comes from. It actually comes from Love Bug Starsky, he explains how one night when he ran out of words and of course he had to come up with something to say while he was switching to another record, he just started scatting. He was just trying to buy time, so he said, "A hip, hop, a hip, hip, hop, a hippy hop". And from that point on it there it was. One of the things I would say is that it is not only about pioneers and icons it was also about inventors. You know we never applied that word to this culture. There had to be a time where "Hip Hop" was never ever said or even much less heard. So who said it? We never intended for it to be Hip Hop. It's so interesting because me and Ralph Tresvant, from New Edition, have deep conversations. It was so interesting because he was with a historian, a guy that was like a real philosopher and stuff and he was saying "Hip Hop" is a very appropriate title for the movement or the culture. Because "hip" means to know and "hop" means to move and to take action so that's the culture. It's like, once we know, we got to move. Once he told me that it blew my mind. And I think about a month later I heard someone else say the same thing, I think it was KRS ONE. It is so interesting and deep that there is more to this than just a feeling or a fad. It goes with the Black Panther movement when you hear in the black exploitation movies,

"Yo man, you hip to this?" Which means "do you know this?" and hop means, "yo hop to it, get to it, make a move, get it going" When I heard this it really blew my mind.

It's kind of like what came first, the chicken or the egg? That's what it all boils down to. We are able to deal with it from the perspectives from which we stand. Because we (Amen-Ra, Dana Dane etc) saw it happening because ain't no tellin' what happened in Brooklyn or what happened in Manhattan. We saw it happening, but ain't no telling what was taking place in some sort of back ally or some sort of basement that we are not aware of, you know. So, who is to say? That's why I am at peace with it, but I am eager to find out, I'm intrigued, I feel like I have a purpose in life to find out. Because to me, watching interviews on the Queens' piece on Hip Hop began, who knew? There are going to be cats out there to dispute that because that takes money and legitimacy out of their credibility. So now that whole line from KRS1 talking about "the bridge is over" takes on whole new meaning. But I'm okay with it, we're grown men now.

I don't think Hip Hop can go back to the way it use to be like it was during the golden era. The reason why is because it was rare, unique, it was precious, it was so new and it can't be new again because it's old. When I was talking with Cheryl (Salt from Salt N Papa), we agreed that Hip Hop is unbalanced. There used to be a time on the radio when right after Heavy D and The Boyz would go off Public Enemy would come on then some Arrested Development then some Kwame. But now it so repetitious and redundant we don't have that diversity anymore. But there is a verse in the Bible in Ecclesiastics that says "all things become new again". So when I see groups like Little Mama, The Retro Kids, and all of this they are bringing back the haircuts, the gear, the boom boxes, the old cell phones. I'm seeing signs and I'm saying we've been blessed to live long enough to see this. I'm not interested in acting anymore; I'm not interested in rapping anymore. And I'm being honest when I say this, it feels so good to say that, and it's real in my heart. Now, in regards to transitioning over into film and imagery I feel I may be able to contribute.

I have been blessed and so fortunate to be saved through Hip Hop. I was seriously destined to eventually murder someone and die so early in life. Because of my ignorant obsession with the streets, I was on my way to do whatever to be accepted and sometimes I did. What started out, as one thing became the introduction to 'hope'. At a club called, The Roxy, I saw the power of the music bringing different races of people together that normally wouldn't give each other the time of day. Our people were dancing with people that I was trained to rob. I was once a wreck about to happen and now I am an educator and hopefully an inspiration on how God specializes in turning junk into something useful.

Play's story is as equally captivating as Amen-Ra's. Play's narrative reminds us that rapping builds on the African musical tradition when he mentions Love Bug Starsky's scatting. Just as Dizzy Gillespie's Afro-Cuban experiments participated in a new demographic shift in the 1940s (that is Cubans migrating to the United States), today's musicians mix hip hop conventions with other expressions to reflect the configuration and constant refigurations of their social worlds and the statements they want to make in them (Ramsey, 2002, p. 320). It was these novel sensibilities (mixing, dancing, freestyle rapping and aerosol writing) that provided the backdrop for emerging cultural rituals.

The relationship with schooling played an important role of each of the Architects. Each of the stories identified a particular affectionate characteristic when discussing life growing up in inner city New York. For Amen-Ra, studies at the local performing and visual arts high school, followed by a matriculation at Howard University provided for what is now considered an accomplished career. Play, on the other hand, was kicked out of school and subsequently learned via a matriculation of the school of hard knocks (life's trials and errors). The most notable characteristic here is perseverance. Whether through the traditional medium of schooling or a 'street curriculum' the outcome of being educated is a resulting culmination of life's experiences. This concept is what Dewey (1938) refers to as a unification of continuity and interaction. In speaking on this topic Dewey posits the following:

> They (continuity and interaction) intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience. Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the latter ones. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow (p. 44).

I also noted that Play and Amen-Ra mentioned the song Super Rappin' as an identifiable hallmark of Hip Hop's commencement. With the assistance of a classic up-tempo soulful yet funky beat, "Super Rappin'" (Glover, Glover, Morris, Wiggins, & Williams, 1996, track 10) exemplifies characteristic Hip Hop. After a brief five-second musical introduction Melle Mel begins with the following,

> Introducing the crew you gotta see to believe.
> We're one, two, three, four, five MCs…
> Dig this, We're the Furious Five plus Grand Faster Flash.
> Givin you a blast of sho' nuff class.
> So to prove to you all we're second to none,
> We're gonna make five MCs sound like one…

Neal (1999) notes the following:

> Because of hip-hop's intimate connection to African-American youth culture, its narratives usually mirrored whatever concerns were deemed crucial to black youth. Like the music that echoed throughout black dance halls in the 1930s and 1940s, the "party and bullshit" themes of most early hip-hop represented efforts to transcend the dull realities of urban life, including body-numbering experiences within low-wage service industries and inferior and condescending urban school systems (p. 140).

The song Super Rappin' contextualized with Neal's illustration is most apropos in understanding Play's response of the current state of Hip Hop. In an honest but enlightening critique Play compares modern Hip Hop metaphorically to a skipping record. Play states the following:

> *I put it like this, but you have to go back in time a little bit. Have you ever been to a great party and at the time a great record is on the turntable and you're really, really feeling the song with the person you're dancing with. You both are in the zone! But all of a sudden the record starts skipping and as everyone else who is in the same zone, everyone hopes it will fix itself, but it doesn't and it's too late and the buzz is ruined. Hip Hop music hit an interesting place in its growth, but it's stuck there, it's skipping. It's the same thing over and over and over.*

Here it is important to note his use of the skipping record metaphor. The metaphors allow researchers to see, conceptualize, and envision how particular social phenomena fit, or are at work, in relationship to our social setting and context (i.e., the spatial), historical, or chronological sensibilities (i.e., the temporal), and how they relate to other entities or events in our world (Buendia, 2003, p. 55). Positioning the skipping record metaphor in a more global context, I note Dyson's previous commentary of Hip Hop exposing larger American societal issues (mass material consumption, misogyny, patriarchy and social injustice to name a few). It is here that I return to King's definition of *agape* love. As a professed born again Christian, the skipping record metaphor invokes Play's more spiritual perspective on life. He (Play) acknowledges that Hip Hop is in a bad place but looks beyond Hip Hop for plausible causes and solutions to its existent problems. King states:

> It (agape) means understanding, redeeming good for all men…When we rise to love on the *agape* level we love men not because we like them, not because their attitudes and ways appeal to us, but because God loves us. Here we rise to the position of loving the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. With this type of love and understanding good will we will be able to stand amid the radiant glow of the new age with dignity and discipline (1992, p. 23).

The focus according to both Play and King is not on the individual but on the deed. Moving back to the Hip Hop metaphor. The art form and culture are not necessarily to blame. When a record skips it's customary for the crowd to take the high road and 'blame the DJ', but the DJ is not often the cause of the skip or scratch in the record. The skip is the result of a larger issue of an imperfection in the record. As such, Hip Hop's proliferation of positive and negative representations are the result of much larger societal issues in America and the world.

Dana Dane's Story

I'm from Fort Greene Brooklyn but what most people don't know is that I was born in East Elmhurst Queens. I lived in Queens for about two years and my mother bounced around to different shelters and homes and stuff until she finally got us a place in the Walt Whitman houses of the Fort Greene Projects at age four. I moved there when I was about four years old and I lived there for about 22 years. Coming up in Fort Greene was rough, you had the avenue kings, tomahawks, and other gangs, but I never got touched. You know if you lived in the projects you were safe, but if you came outside of the projects you were going to be in real trouble. I avoided them for the most part but I got into one, or two little scratches. I was just talking to my lady's son and he asked me if I ever got into a fight. I said. "naw, I didn't get into many fights, but the fights I did get into, I managed to win". I got into one fight and I got my ass whip very thoroughly for being drunk. Fort Greene taught me a lot. It taught me how to watch my back, hold my own and how to deal with other people because right across the street was the affluent people, people with money. Those people lived across the street in the brownstones.

Now, I didn't have it like that at all. I used to always shop on Delancy Street and as people know, Delancy street is the mecca for any expensive clothing. The thing I learned early on was refurbish the gear, this means you wear your sneakers and you tread lightly, you clean them everyday and wash the shoe laces and things of that sort. A lot of times my mom didn't have the money to get me new gear, especially when I went to high school. But me being able to run numbers and play numbers and actually hit sometimes, I was able to refurbish my gear and make something that was old and make it look new. I can't always say that I had it like that but being broke gave me some ingenuity to make my gear look good.

I started going to elementary school, P.S. 67, then I went to Macomb and they had this SAMM program. That stood for science, art, math and music. I went into this program for art and from there my mom said "you know what, we're changing to another school. I'll take you to 136th street where it has music and art." I went to an audition for that school with my pencil and drawing pad. Next thing I know, I was enrolled in that school. So I was making my trek from Brooklyn Fort Greene to 135th street every morning on the C train.

My earliest memories of Hip Hop was when it started gravitating throughout via the cassette tapes. People talked about it being in the Bronx and they started putting together those park jams. It was right before I started high school about '78, when I got into high school. So by the time I got to Hip Hop, it was the wave everybody was trying to be a part of whether it was being a b-boy, a gangers, or a hardcore. They were "hardcores" back then, they didn't use the word "gangster" then. I picked it (Hip Hop) up by listening to the tapes and paying attention to the fashion sense. Even at the age of 11, I was going to a tailor and having them making me tailor made pants. I would go pick up my own material and I would take my own little money I got from hustling, running numbers or whatever it was at the time to get my tailor

made pants. As a matter of fact, when I graduated from junior high school I had a pair of tailor made pants.

When I saw Hip Hop artists and how they dressed, I wanted to be a part of it a little bit more because I liked the Kangols and the whole b-boy swagger. I liked the fat shoelaces with the tight trim around the ankles. But when I really got into it was when I met up with the whole Kangol crew, Slick Rick,_____ and Heartbreakers. That was really my introduction to Hip Hop. You know the whole Kangol group situation, there is no real history on how we formulated. I don't know if one us could tell you how we got together. I know that we went to school together. We had three guys from Brooklyn and two guys from the Bronx. Slick Rick and Lance Brown was from the Bronx. Heartbreaker, myself, and Coolah Key was from Brooklyn. To my recollection I already knew Coolah and Will before I met Rick and Lance. They had already been friends before we met. When I started to kick it with them, it was math class or history class. We had a substitute that day, and Rick was sitting in the back telling a story. At the time, I was just starting to listen to rap. I didn't have anything of my own to rap about. When I heard Rick rap, I thought it was hot. I heard people rhyme something of that sort, but never heard it done like that. Everybody had their own rhymes except for me and Coolah.

My visual expression is my GQ b-boy. My vocal expression is rap form. I heard a lot of stories. I can tell a story from my point of view and make you see it visually without having to take a picture. Its like one thing I picked up at school was writing in a chronological order where as things have to follow, they just can't jump around, they have to follow from point A to point B, and even if I start with Z you still get the whole story, that's my thing. Being able to express myself visually and express myself vocally, I've tried to do something different. That was my thing with Hip Hop. I like to think of myself as an innovator in that regards.

I attribute school, absolutely, to teaching me how to gather a story. Not just the classes I took, but it was the people around me at school. I liked being around a bunch of diverse kids from Queens, Bronx, Staten Island, kids from all over, all races and gender. That really influenced all of what I do. I went to junior college, the Bronx Community College then I switched over the BMC College.
When I went to college even though I didn't graduate, I really picked up a lot of things in creative writing class. When they really gave me the format of how to really take my craft to another level, it was something that I gravitated to. And I believe in the same form since '84.

Rap is only one form of Hip Hop. Hip Hop is the culture. Hip Hop consists of many things, it's the graffiti artist, and the DJ, the B-boy, the rapper, as well as the MC, it's the producer. It's the element of fashion. Rap is just the vocal part of Hip Hop. I touch on all of them. I never really picked up on DJing. I did a little producing, and graffiti. I focused on being an MC and rapping because that was my main stay.

The current state of Hip Hop is what I expected it to be in some truth and regards. Because I knew that there were going to be changes. I knew it was going to go different levels of music and culture. You know coming up in a golden era, I saw Hip Hop go from being all New York to being in the west coast, and then back to New York and then back to the west coast and then a little bit of Midwest and down to the south and back to the west coast again. Hip Hop became exactly what I thought it would be. Its universal, it's continually growing. It can't be stopped at this point. I believe that it's going to continue to grow. Middle Eastern cats are rapping, Japan is rapping. Hip Hop is one of those things that will bring the whole global situation together indefinitely. It's about the music culture, being able to ignite and express your self and hopefully stay out of trouble.

Dana Dane begins his story with his experiences growing up in Fort Greene Brooklyn. He spends a significant amount of time really talking about the importance of style and presentation. As a "GQ B-boy rapper", Dana Dane's notion of storytelling provide insight to how meticulous the writing process is for a Hip Hop emcee, for that matter any musical artist. Just as my earlier commentary of Hip Hop music production as cultural practice, Dana's theoretical perspective of writing lyrics follows a precise methodology. Dana's calculated plan for storytelling rhymes earlier established by Slick Rick demonstrates a musical style of narration. The following lyrical example is taken from Dana's "Delancey Street" (McCleese & Azor, 1990; 1987, track 5).

Well, I went to Delancey Street to buy some wears
Even though I already had on fresh gear
Go into the store to buy a Kangol
I took out my wallet and my fat money roll
When three females walked up to me
There was a white, a black, the other Chinese
The white girl said, "My name is Dawn
And I love your gear by Louis Vuitton"
The black girl said, "My name is Jane"
And she couldn't keep her hands off the fresh gold chains
The Chinese girl, her name Sushi
She was foggin up the '86 Guccis
I thought they wanted to conversate
Then they all pulled out a six-shooter trey-eight
Three fresh females, who would have thought
Cause they tried to rob me, I almost got caught

I stood there for a minute, tried to concentrate
I tried to think of a way for me to escape
No one in sight, one thing to do
(You mean you ran, Dana Dane?) Damn right I flew

Dana Dane's narrative further Neal's (1999) claim that, "Hip Hop music and culture emerged as a narrative and stylistic distillation of African American youth sensibilities in the late 1970s" (p. 136). Here I point out my first remembrance with Hip Hop. In chapter three I made reference to LL Cool J's *Radio* as an identifying hallmark of when I fell in love with Hip Hop. As Amen-Ra's explains earlier, he sheds light on an imagery that includes the box (a hand held radio) within the context of what was considered in *vogue.* The Kangol, the bop and swing all refer to a style or 'swagger' in Hip Hop culture. This swagger or 'cool ethos' if you will, is present in all forms and representations of Hip Hop. For me, I wanted to acquire that 'swagger' as expressed in the way an individual walks down the street carrying a large 'boom box' (radio) playing the latest mix tape jams. For Dana, it was about the swagger of the Kangol. The hat dipped to the side to express a sense of individuality, the use of the A to Z art of storytelling—all a swagger, a personification of coolness, a way of life.

Salt's Story

A lot of people think that salt and pepper came out of queens when our record drop but I'm actually from Brooklyn, from the bushard section of Brooklyn. I moved to Queens when I was about 17 years old and pertaining living in Brooklyn and Hip-Hop it's the same people remember hearing at block parties, or park jams and getting really excited about what was going on and seeing somebody pick up a mic and somebody turntables talking to the music and you can tell that it was a beginning of something really new and something exciting and I love Hip Hop.

It was that but it was both actually and was, you know, it was the cuties in the park and the music and the break dancers dancing on the cardboards with everybody gathering around and seeing the dance battles and all of that, it's the whole culture. I know where groups meets or I'll be nice about it, the social gathering come together or whose who, seeing her and seeing him and all that kind of stuff. I mean, was it a

party for you and getting together with people or was it the music, was it really really the music.

Well it didn't go well with my family; it wasn't when I was 17 when I fell in love with Hip Hop. I was much younger, and I really wasn't supposed to be in the park. I remember my mom having to get me out of the park, embarrassing me, getting me, coming, finding me at block parties, making me go home. So yea, it wasn't something I could do, it something I had to sneak to do. it happens three times that I can remember. Because it was so embarrising. One time it was with a belt. Another time, it was at some hole in the wall, you know, we would have a party where we could and another time at another time at another park and they said "so your moms here on the mic." I went to Glover Cleveland High School. It was in…..actually in the border line of bushard, border line Queens.

I mean I do think that people do feel Hip Hop is a culture and I can see why. Umm….because it's so many things going on with Hip Hop and it's not just the music, it the language, it a way of dressing, its dance, it's socialization and usually people that love Hip Hop kind of cling together. So I can see the influences. So I guess it does make it a culture.

I'm a rapper and my contribution to Hip Hop is huge because we did a lot of firsts, first females in Hip Hop, first to go platinum, first to win a Grammy, first to break down a lot barriers when we first started, you know, there weren't a lot of women selling records and being commercial. I feel like we were the first females to really really do the whole commercial thing as far as radio play. So, our contribution, to me, is showing that women can really make it in Hip Hop, make money, and sale records.

I feel like the current state of Hip Hop its definitely thriving financially. It's still influencing all other genres of music. And on a positive note, I think it's great because it still allow business opportunities for so many people that might not be able to be in the music industry. But on a not so good note, you know, I think creatively, we've gotten kind of lazy and have begun taken the easy way out and it can be overly misogynistic and glorify negative images like drugs and violence and it's very materialistic. Hip Hop needs to be more balanced because when we started, there was so much more to choose from as far as a word, you had your female empowerment which was Salt n Pepa, and you had Public Enemy, politically conscious, and now, to me, its kind of going into one direction and to me that's negative influences on people.

Fewer female MCs receive the national attention of their male counterparts. Although Black women have played a major role in the popularity of Hip-Hop, how they discuss sexuality, politics, and male dominance has been subjected to scrutiny from mainstream

society. Dating back to the late 70s to mid 80s, Black female MCs like M.C. Lady D, Salt 'N' Pepa, MC Lyte, Sista Souljah, Monie Love, and Queen Latifah were at the top of the charts. M.C. Lady D was the first recorded woman rapper in 1978. Since then she was rated Philadelphia's top radio DJ and acqired the position of editor-in-chief of the Hip-Hop magazine/tabloid *Word Up!* In 1988 MC Lyte released her album 'Paper Thin' and sold over 125, 000 copies in the first six months. Salt 'N' Pepa's first single "Expressions" from *Black's Magic* went gold (500,000 copies sold) in the first week and stayed in the number one position on Billboard's Rap Chart for over two months (Rose 1994, p. 155).

Rose (1994) argues that women MCs are important voices in Hip-Hop culture, producing Black feminist criticism through their lyrics and style. Many who write about rap and Hip-Hop have ignored women artists and have not looked carefully at the social and political context of rap. For example, MC Lyte's song, *Lyte as Rock* offers a unique criticism of people who think that female MCs are weak. The metaphor 'light as a rock' signifies a silent but deadly approach to Hip-Hop and other issues facing women. Black women rappers affirm black female popular pleasure and public presence by privileging black female subjectivity and black female experiences in the public sphere (Rose 1994, 182). Furthermore, Black female MCs are not afraid to bring forth a critical challenge to misrepresentations of Black womanhood and send a call to action to debunk commonly held misperceptions of their womanhood and simultaneously with their Blackness. Their physical presence as real women, not symbols, help shake up notions of a woman's place. For example, Salt N Pepa's song, "Expression" (James, 1992, track 1) states,

> Like my body, yes, I'm somebody
> No, I'm sorry, i'm-a rock this mardis gras
> Until the party ends, friends
> Yes, I'm blessed, and I know who I am

I express myself on every jam
I'm not a man, but I'm in command
Hot damn, I got an all-girl band
And I wear the gear, yeah, I wanna wear it, too
I don't care, dear, go ahead and stare (oooo)
Afraid to be you, livin' in fear (boo)
Expression is rare, I dare you

Through this song they are controlling their own representations in the counter public sphere of Hip-Hop and larger society. Representations of Blackness have always been in the American public sphere. When you put a man, woman, and children on a stage for sale to the highest bidder they are immediately placed in the public sphere. From the early days of the jazz musician's use of improvisation—to modern day rhetoric of Hip Hop as non-artistic—African American's have always suffered the fate of defending their artistic sensibilities. Hip Hop's challenge to status quo and dominant forms of hegemony provides a framework that is derivative of a classic criticism of Black and African-American musics. From the early days of the burgeoning American nation, the Negro has suffered the fate of the dominant class' ruling ideologies. As discussed earlier in this work I outline the genetic inferiority and cultural deficit paradigm. Over the years that paradigm has morphed into different forms—all the while maintaining the same foundation of domination.

Chapter two began with a quote from Antonín Dvorák that positions Negro melodies as a viable form of musical expression. Unfortunately, for the Negro living in America his sensibilities were not considered at this time. He was not regarded as an equal; not human—and consequently had no need for such an emotional response. As America changed—the Negro people changed as well. From Negro spirituals to Jazz, Blues, Rock & Roll and Soul—'marginal' Americans have always had a need for creative expression. Most often in the form of comedic renditions of themselves and life on the plantation, these individuals

were nonetheless seeking an artistic method of affirmation and self-emancipation from the current plight of their conditions—if only for a brief moment.

As the Architects' stories are experienced the desire is to cast a web of significance that would serve as an exposition for the reader to encounter a more authentic depiction of Hip Hop. The historical and biographical accounts of the Architects as told, provide a context to de-center previously held stereotypes about the culture of Hip Hop as poisonous and non-artistic. "Stereotypes, however inaccurate, are one form of representation. Like fictions, they are created to serve as substitutions, standing in for what is real" (hooks, 1992, p. 341). It is my hope that in listening to their voices a new imagery of what accounts as Hip Hop is established.

A Counternarrative of Hip Hop

Goodall (2000) posits "a new ethnography is a story based on the represented, or evoked, experiences of a self, with others, within a context" (p. 83). In this section, I use a significant segment of the Architects' data to craft a counternarrative to create a profile of Hip Hop's lived experiences. According to Seidman (1998),

> a profile in the words of the participants is the research product that I think is most consistent with the process of interviewing. It allows us to present the participant in context, to clarify his or her intentions, and to convey a sense of process and time, all central components of qualitative analysis. We interview in order to come to know the experience of the participants through their stories…by crafting a profile in the participant's own words, the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person's consciousness. (p. 102)

The Architects' stories as presented offer a glimpse into the lives of four individuals. However, after serious and more in-depth deliberation I have concluded that the data did not present enough evidence to fully support my desire of developing a more authentic story to

challenge the misconceptions and prejudices as presented in the majoritatian story. It was at this point that reached an 'ahh ha' moment. I then realized that I needed a different approach to viewing and interpreting the data. I began to rethink my methodologies and proceeded to 'interview' the data. As such, I decided to craft the meta narrative using the Architects as baseline data while filling in the open spaces with my personal and experiential knowledge as well as previously written accounts of Hip Hop. The crafted account includes previous conversations that I have had with other Hip Hop pioneers, for example I had the opportunity to have lunch with Grand Wizzard Theodore, the individual credited with creating the scratch. During lunch, our conversation revealed a great deal about 'the sense of community' in the early days of Hip Hop. The process of crafting the counter narrative forced me to take a look the participant (Hip Hop) in a new context. I proceeded to take the Architects stories along with my 'virtual memory' data and interweave it into a story. Three hours later all I had was two paragraphs. The only thing I had really accomplished was the consumption of a bag of Snyder's pretzels and four glasses of lemonade. I decided to go to sleep.

The next morning, I woke up singing *Super Rappin'*. I silently inquired, if Hip Hop was going to tell a story about itself how would it be done. *Super Rappin'* was the ticket. I decided to embark on a poetic journey of Hip Hop. In this poetic mode I aspire to "get at the essence of what's said, the emotions expressed, and the rhythm of speaking…that creates a third voice that is neither the interviewee's nor the researcher's but a combination of both (Glesne, 2006, p. 200). In classic MC mode I present the following counternarrative.

Hip Hop

The hippy, the hop, the hip hip hop
To know—be inspired from the roots of be-bop
To move—take action like the toe tappin' man

Hearing my name on the mic—now that would be the jam

From Le Tigre & jeans to fresh pressed suits
This is a story of my roots and routes
1520 on the west side
Sedgwick Ave—that's the spot where we begin this ride

Kool Herc the DJ touting two turntables of steel
The Mexican, Get ready, Give it up, that was real!
The Herculoids was the crew that bore his name
But Apache & Bongo Rock was his claim to fame

The music was smooth filled with positive attitude
A nice beat with a melody we could all groove to
Disgusted by politics and the ills around town
Hip Hop became the movement to turn those frowns upside down

Afrika Bambaataa—the mighty Zulu
No more gang violence but alternatives for the youth
Boogie down—the Grandmasters—Flash was serious
With not three, not four, but five who were furious

In us our ancestors instilled a sense of community
The writers, the breakers, our foundation was unity
Bringing everyone together Black, White, Latino was our goal
For power, ingenuity struck in, let's just rig the light pole

Like Dolemite before us, rappin' and tappin' became our game
We did it freestyle—a spirit of improv that the jazz greats gave
The Last Poets, Gil Scott Heron and Nikki Giovanni were all on point
Pigmeat's "Here comes the judge", now that's an original Hip Hop joint

Negating offers of stardom presented again and again
Staying true to our art form and the people we called friends
Some go off to college, others matriculate on the streets
Whatever you pleasure, the goal was just to eat

Souls sold out—cartoonin' like Ren and Tin
Blaxpliotation regurgitating over again
We just wanted to come up just trying to get paid
Images of lifestyles just laid in the shade

The nasty crew, 2 Live, with the main man Luke
Jelly Roll's "Gimmie a pallet", one in the same, just another juke
From Huey, Malcolm and Martin, all were arrested
To attitude filled niggas, Fuck the Police!, they contested

Nine times four just do the arithmetic
Thirty-six chambers of wisdom to make the mind tick
5% spreading knowledge that reigns supreme
PE's 'Fight the Power' made the silver screen

They gave us some C.R.E.A.M. some say sold us a dream
In those days there was balance—you know what I mean
Not sayin it was all good but it sure wasn't all bad
We needed time to grow up we're now mothers and dads

Our routes have taken us away from our roots
Saggin' conundrums now sported as a looks
Pushin' crass images of Sara just to get paid
What happened to women like Spin, Pep, and Salt, the 'Shoop' days.

The Queen, Monie Love, MC Lyte they got skills
It ain't just Hip Hop pushin' masculine, yeah that's for real
Actions require responsibility that's a matter of fact
But America's in the middle, in the middle is where you at

35 years gone by we got kids of our own
Time to take a new action, raise our fam(ily), buy a home
At some point things change, times always do
But I'll never forget that day with Herc and his crew

Analysis

In this section, I incorporate a considerable portion of the study's data to offer a response to my initial line of inquiry. The following seeks to provide an analysis of the accounts as presented in the Architects of Hip Hop's stories. The general consensus among the Architects is that Hip Hop is a cultural practice that is inclusive of rap music, a style of dress, language, visual art and dancing to name a few. As such, this analysis of Hip Hop's origin and development is situated as a matter of an evolving culture of practice. The focus upon people and their musical practices and processes rather than upon structures, texts or products, illuminates the ways in which music is used and the important role that it plays in everyday life and in society generally (Cohen, 1993, p. 127). The major themes uncovered

illustrate Hip Hop through, 1) evolving practice, 2) artistic and aesthetic integrity, 3) critical positionality and 4) community in action.

As I introduced this chapter to the reader I presented an expose of Common's *I Used To Love H.E.R.*. To further my analysis it is necessary to incorporate a segment from the third verse of that same song.

> I might've failed to mention that the shit was creative
> But once the man got you well he altered the native
> Told her if she got an energetic gimmick
> That she could make money, and she did it like a dummy
> But I'm a take her back hopin' that the shit stop
> Cause who I'm talkin' 'bout y'all is hip-hop

Common's epic battle with the one he loves explicitly illustrates Hip Hop's awareness of the issues associated with its commercialization. It also highlights broader societal issues of sexism, specifically the commodification of women. In the stories as presented by the Architects, they provide context clues to the motivation for their initial engagement and subsequent love for Hip Hop. However, the first sub-theme of 'no clearly defined origin' is most useful in understanding its progression. As the artists explain, Hip Hop was just something to do. They didn't conceptualize it they way academicians, journalists, and other enthusiasts do today. Forman & Neal's (2004) Hip Hop reader provides a plausible rationale for those who desire to engage in scholarly discourse on the subject. Forman states:

> With That's the Joint!, we assert that research and writing, whether in journalistic or academic contexts, is absolutely part of the wider hip-hop culture. Analyzing, theorizing, and writing about hip-hop are also forms of cultural labor and should accordingly be regarded as consequential facets of hip-hop (p. 3).

This concept of not truly conceptualizing Hip Hop in the manner in which Forman explains is apparent in the dialog of Salt's interview. When asked do you consider a difference

between rap and Hip Hop, Salt briefly paused and responded, “Umm….no. No, I don’t know the difference between rap and Hip Hop.”. As Play continues he asks, “You don’t embrace or have heard of the theory that Hip Hop is the culture and rap is the music of the Hip Hop culture”. Salt replies, “Oh…ok. That sounds good”. The interesting dynamic here follows my previous assertion, agreeing with Dorrell (2004) that music (and all artistic expressions) is a part of an evolutionary and biological process. Simply put, it’s something people do.

The second point of discussion follows the notion of Hip Hop’s artistic and aesthetic integrity. Interestingly, three of the four artists mention the engagement with multiple elements of Hip Hop. One might infer this relationship as an evolutionary lineage to African ideologies and engagement in the arts—and Hip Hop’s identifiable linkages to these past traditions. Case in point is the intersection of the cultural expressions of the DJ, MC and B-Boy/Girl. In discussing historical linkages to this concept Dimitriadis (1996) notes,

> the integration of dance with music is, again, crucial to understanding African and African-inspired musics, such as blues or jazz. Unlike composed 'classical' European forms (arts which are represented by some sort of written score), such musics are brought to life through live production and concurrent improvisation (p. 181).

Amen-Ra offers the following,

> I guess for me it’s all about the artistic mind. I mean once you’re an artist you are always an artist no matter what kind artist you decide you want to be. The whole idea is whether visual or just internal, it’s just in you. I mean as a kid I did martial arts and then I got into musical arts and if you really study a lot of artist you’ll be surprised.

Here I will also point out the ethical constraints that Hip Hop artists placed on themselves and those who sought to enter the discourse. In chapter three I discuss Schloss’ (2004) ‘no biting’ ethic. This example, as presented, serves as an identifiable aesthetic value within the realm of Hip Hop culture. From DJ & MC duos/groups to B-Boy and B-Girl crews—the Hip

Hop aesthetic went beyond the artistic realm—it also forged new and long lasting communal relationships.

Like bebop before it, hip-hop's politics was initially a politics of style that created an aural and stylistic community in response to the erosion of community with the postindustrial city (Neal, 1999, p. 137). Hunt (1999) posits that community begins with a people's desire for community because it is the right way to live; it is realized when the desire is put into action (p. 102). Given the proliferation of debilitating forces present in the inner city, the urban youth gravitated toward Hip Hop to fill a void created as a result of New York's 'so called' plan for urban renewal and the reneging of arts programs in the public school system. The desire to fashion a sense of community in Hip Hop provided an innate platform for youth in inner city New York to come together—to act. Play comments,

> What started out, as one thing became the introduction to 'hope'. At a club called, The Roxy, I saw the power of the music bringing different races of people together that normally wouldn't give each other the time of day. Our people were dancing with people that I was trained to rob.

It was typical that each of the pioneers was a member or affiliate with some type of crew or posse. For Dana it was the Kangol Crew. Play was involved in illegal activities and later became a b-boy and an MC. Salt's infatuation and communal spirit was initially garnered through a patron participatory lens. As she comments, "I mean, was it a party for you and getting together with people or was it the music, was it really really the music". The identities and relationships formed during these early days of Hip Hop provide close reminders of how things 'used to be'.

As an outsider, it is difficult to come to grips with the actual feeling of being in the park, on the block, and sweating at an indoor jam. I even posit that one reason for the current

state of Hip hop is due to the lack of understanding of what Hip Hop is. To make a comparison to Jazz, one would not be considered a true jazz saxophonist and not know the stylistic sensibilities and musical expressions of John Coltrane or Charlie Parker. Similarly, I suggest that in Common's words of 'taking it (Hip Hop) back', what is needed is a way to educate today's youth on the history of Hip Hop. Nontheless, I am optimistic about the future of Hip Hop and intend to use these stories—as well as others that will be chronicled and archived, for the purposes of imparting a true sense of Hip Hop.

Comparison of Narratives

What is Hip Hop? The master narrative as posited in Paula Zahn situates it in a context that is viewed via an art or poison dichotomy. In contrast, the counter-narratives told by people of color reflect an awareness of the discrimination that affects every aspect of their lives (Jay, 2006, p. 134). The position taken here seeks to identify the thematic constructs within Zahn and present the counternarrative(s) as compared and contrasted to the majoritatian perspective. Below I list some of the assumptions as identified in the majoritarian perspective.

- Hip Hop is violent, misogynistic and homophobic;
- Hip Hop is a culture of extravagant and expensive consumption and;
- Hip Hop has become fixated in a state of negative representations

Looking at the resonant themes as presented in Zahn there are instances of the same sentiments provided in the Architects stories and the counternarrative. However, to provide a context where the dichotomy and constructs are viewed and challenged, there must be a

neutral ground to assess these inferences. They both agree that the current state of Hip Hop is in need of much refurbishment. But the important thing is to look at how the dichotomy (art or poison) is being presented. In looking at Zahn, the guiding question of Hip Hop: Is it Art or Poison, and its subsequent dialog represent a position that is negative and hegemonic in nature. The majoritarian commentary as posited in Zahn adopts what hooks (1992) refers as universal subjectivity. As such, the transmission of Zahn perpetuates a *myth* of

> "sameness" even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness as a sign of informing who they are and how they think. Many of them are shocked that black people think critically about whiteness because racist thinking perpetuates the fantasy that the Other who is subjugated, who is subhuman, lacks the ability to comprehend, to understand, to see the working of the powerful (hooks, 1992, p. 340).

In offering a concrete example, I will further discuss the assumption that Hip Hop is violent. In the case of Zahn vs. the Architects, Zahn makes statements that cast a shadow on the culture of Hip Hop by inciting language that conveys an offensive tonality. The architects, on the other hand, acknowledge that the violent undertones, as presented in the music and imagery, represent a reality of living in inner cities in America. In using language to convey meaning, the majoritarian story gains ground in shaping the discourse. hooks notes,

> an effective strategy of white supremacist terror and dehumanization during slavery centered around white control of the black gaze. To be fully an object then was to lack the capacity to see or recognize reality (1992, p. 340).

Tricia Rose (1994) relates the sensibilities of the youth in the urban ghetto to mainstream's desire to influence the realities of Black external and internal perception.

> The public school system, the police, and the popular media perceive and construct young African Americans as a dangerous internal element in urban America; an element that, if allowed to roam freely, will threaten the social order; an element that must be policed. Since rap music is understood as the predominate symbolic voice of

> black urban males, it heightens this sense of threat and reinforces dominant white middle class objections to urban black youths who do not aspire (but are haunted by) white middle class standards (130-5; as cited in Neal, 1999, p. 146).

The point that I wish to elaborate is the fact that Hip Hop, as expressed and presented through certain depictions, is not the issue. The issue at hand is—if there is going to be a set of criterion that judge artistic representations of American culture(s)—that criterion should be used across the board. No one 'calls out' the multimillion-dollar blockbuster movies that position violence over storylines and ask if they are 'art or poison'. Positioned along side the Terminator saga , the Matrix trilogy, and Lord of War, Hip Hop doesn't come close to matching expressions of violence. If you take 35 years of Playboy, Hustler, and gentleman's club magazines and imagery—stack it up next to a DVD collection of all the Hip Hop videos that display scantily clad women—Hip Hop is not even a close second. If society—dominant society that is—is going to let the movie industry off the hook for violence, then it must do the same for Hip Hop. If society is going to give Hugh Heffner a pardon and key to the city, it needs to play fair and at least give Hip Hop a get out of jail free card. If these things are not going to be done, people of color will continue to live on the margins in the face of disrespect, fear and dishonor. Paula Zahn, operating under the guise of universal subjectivity, is rooted and reified in a system that historically places people of color in an inferior and deficient typology. Elliott (1995) points out Borhek and Curtis' (1975) notion that, if even one basic principle in a highly systematic set of beliefs is invalid, then all the others must be considered suspicious, if not invalid (p. 38). This position as posited by Elliott, Borhek, and Curtis applies not only to Zahn, but to the epistemological constraints that the traditional field of music education has placed on all non-Western musicing practices as well.

Zahn, in strict conformity to media standards of hegemony, what is considered objectionable is a product of her own ideologies and interpretations. I also note that Zahn does not take into account the cultural significance of Hip Hop and what that significance means to the people who are practitioners in its various expressional forms. What Zahn actually does, is an attempt to make a case for Hip Hop as art or poison under the microcosm of rap music and videos. The stories as presented by the Architects situate Hip Hop as an identifiable culture. They also infer that the current state of what is called Hip Hop is not true Hip Hop. The depictions of Hip Hop, as represented in Zahn are the result of a commercialized media conglomerate whose only motivation to produce 'art' is intrinsic to bottom line spreadsheets. In looking at Zahn's position, a similar comparison would be to question, America: is it art or poison—while only showing representations of the Terminator, Lord of War, and Playboy. This narrow depiction of America as presented echoes Zahn's case against Hip Hop. At best, it is inconclusive and invalid due to highly skewed biased data representation. As I continue, I will close this work with additional points of inquiry and implications for the use of Hip Hop pedagogy in education.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Implications

Equity or Inequity
Fair play or Foul play
Friendship or Enmity
Unity or Division
Love or Hate
Which way do we go?

D.G. Hunt (1998)

A world of dichotomies

Everywhere I look I see a world where people are faced with a dichotomy of sorts. Elliott (1995) posits, "past music education philosophy severely underestimates what it takes to listen to and to make music well because it fails to examine the intricate relationships among listening, performing, and the performative nature of music" (p. 32). Unfortunately, using past methods from within a philosophical stance espoused by Reimer (1989), curriculum developers would have us to believe that 'one size' fits all and 'one taste' suits all palates. Because of its focus on the consumption of aesthetic products, past philosophy also promotes an illogical educational dichotomy (Elliott, 1995, p. 32). This dichotomy as noted in Elliott (1995) suggests that past philosophers like Reimer (1989) subscribe to beliefs that music as listening is for one group of students while the performative aspects of music are relegated for a totally different group of students.

As a CRT study in music education—I contend that the dichotomy as presented in the

aesthetic products and past philosophies paradigm are rooted in a foundation that foregrounds race as a means to immerse students into what it (traditional music education) considered as legitimate forms of music. Ultimately, this is a dissertation about race and how perspectives on race affect and assert themselves on people in society and eventually 'what' and 'how' subjects are taught. Race is a socially constructed category of nothingness. Outside of the construct—a social reality if you will, to control, subjugate, marginalize, and 'other' people—it serves no purpose. Be that as it may, it (race) still refers to, and shapes, a type of meaning. According to Baldwin (1985), "this notion of social reality thus refers to the distinct historical, cultural, philosophical and ideological conditions of these two racial groups"[17] (p. 216). Baldwin further suggests that our respective social realities represent distinct cosmologies. He further argues, "these cosmological systems, therefore, represent fundamentally different ontological systems and cultural definitions, which reflect their distinct approaches to conceptualizing, organizing and experiencing reality" (Baldwin, p. 216). This thing called race has invariably shaped the minds of people and has affected everything in society.

Although race is central to my overall argument—I am largely influenced by a cultural paradigm. The heart of this discussion is not limited to whether or not race is a factor in debilitating people of color in this country and world—but equally important is the nature of culture and its role in the process. In the work, *Understanding Culturally Different People*, Hunt, Ellison & Hunt (1998) present three elements implicit in cultural classifications.

1. culture implies value and in that sense culture is universal—all people have values which guide the way they live;

[17] Here Baldwin is explicitly describing a social relationship/reality between African-Americans and European-Americans.

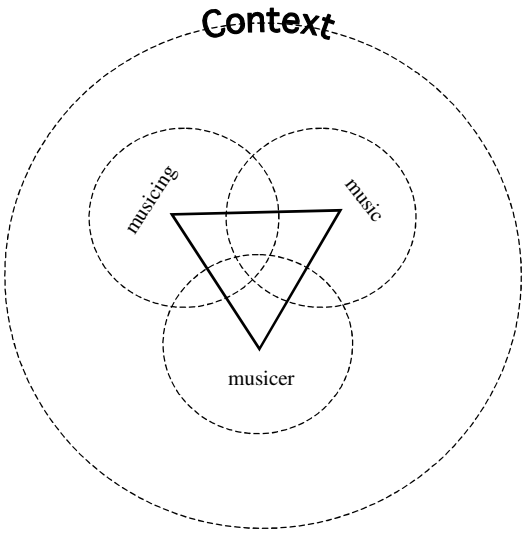
2. culture identifies coherence and structure in human behavior, e.g., in-group/out-group feelings and the ways in which culturally diverse groups interact with each other;

3. culture expresses a lifestyle, the shaping of the past and the aspirations for the future.

The presence of culture—in an ideological and epistemological framework provides the lens by which we view others and ourselves. As an overall study in music education, the stories as presented in Architects of Hip Hop, along with the praxial philosophy of Hip Hop music production, lend themselves to developing what is hopefully a deeper understanding of the ideologies and cultural practices present within the greater Hip Hop community. The Architects' narratives support an intrinsic value of ingenuity and creativity 'in process'. Human expression desires to survive by whatever means necessary. The Architects' sense of community and ethics is demonstrated in the openness of embracing multiple cultures in the observation and performance of Hip Hop's art and customs. In short, the lifestyle and shaping of Hip Hop (music) the Hip Hopper (musicer) and Hip Hopping (musicing) exhibit the characteristics of an identifiable practice.

> By "practice" I mean not the rehearsing and refining that goes on in practice studios but "practice" in a larger sense of shared human endeavor. A human practice is something a group of people organizes toward some kind of practical end (Elliott, 1995, p. 42).

As a visual aid I incorporate Elliott's 'four dimensions of musicing'.



In Elliott's illustration, he contends that music is at least a four dimensional concept that involves: 1) a doer, 2) some kind of doing, 3) something done, and 4) the complete context in which doers do what they do. By doing a critical race project on the lives of Hip Hop artists and their practices I was able to ascertain insight on the doers but equally the kind of doing as well. For example, the chapter that presents Hip Hop music production as cultural practice, I discussed the artists' approach of 'doing' and the outcomes 'something done' of their engagement in Hip Hop arts. The Architects' stories as presented, assist in conceptualizing the doer and what they do—the motivations that impel them to act. I posit these practice specific contexts lay the basis for a group's experiences—in this case Hip Hop—which provides a framework and plausible considerations for use in the critical and culturally responsive classroom.

Implications for Education

As educators we have the arduous task of preparing students for the world outside of the classroom. Today's society is highly consumed by media, and as such, the mass mediated

outlets of representation control and shape how and what people think. As Apple (2004) discusses, the effects of historic and contemporary ideologies have a direct impact on the values that enter into the curriculum. To support this position, Froehlich (2007) offers the following.

> Informed or intuitive choices made by an individual indicate allegiances to particular groups, how those groups are structured hierarchically, and where and how each individual fits into those hierarchies. The more music teachers are aware of them in their own lives and in the lives of their students, colleagues, and superiors, the more practical sociological knowledge becomes in one's daily teaching (p. 113).

The examples presented in Zahn and the Architects shed light on the social and institutional factors that make us who we are. When equally attuned to the bird's-eye view, the bottoms-up approach, and 'being in the middle of it,' sociological thinking allows us to identify and become familiar with the many layers of interactions that shape each culture, society, family, school, classroom, and rehearsal (Froehlich, 2007, p. 115).

According to Abrahams (2008),

> music teachers must share some of the responsibility for the dismal state of music education in many schools. Their curricular focus on the reproduction of music methodologies (Regelski, 2004) which are steeped in Western 'art' music and a Eurocentric nineteenth century aesthetic that is hardly relevant or interesting to children in school (p. 224).

As a result of their pre-service and in-service training in the system of a Eurocentric aesthetic, it becomes increasingly difficult for music educators to open up to the possibilities of educating using musics that represent non-Western and non-Eurocentric cultures.

In citing Giroux (1990), Sleeter (n.d.) illustrates how curriculum can silence students of color by presenting a white view of the world and thereby negating the students' worldview and their authority to speak from that worldview. "Music educators, if they are to

teach a music curriculum that is liberating, are challenged to analyze present traditions and practices" (Abrahams, 2008, p. 224-5). Within this study I explore the fundamentals of music education and present a praxial methodology that is inclusive of culturally relevant material. By situating Hip Hop production as a cultural musical practice, in and of itself, it challenges the previously held assumptions of what is considered 'knowledge' in the musical classroom. This pedagogy when exercised suggests "that each kind of artistic knowing needs to be taught and learned in its own context through active involvement in artistic making" (Elliott, 1995, p. 249). The challenge of this task in music pedagogy is that what Green (2005) refers to as the "aesthetic of classical music autonomy" (p.88).

> …teachers tend to be largely trained in classical music themselves, and to adopt twentieth century-derived classical pedagogical approaches, which ride roughshod over the informal learning practices by which most of these other musics have always been transmitted. Thus, although there is new content in the music classroom, the teaching strategies mitigate against its authenticity (Green, p. 88).

The prevailing question is—how does the contemporary educator take the information within this study and use it to "open possibilities for creative expression that are both liberating and transformational" (Abrahams, p. 225)? Music education can learn much on this from critical pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy

To engage in a liberating and transformational experience, practitioners must adopt a critical pedagogy for music education. According to Abrahams, "critical pedagogy for Music Education invites teachers to use many different teaching strategies to accomplish the mission, which is to empower children to be musicians" (p. 227). What does it mean to be critical? McLaren (2003) suggests that critical theory begins with the premise "that men and

women are essentially free and inhibit a world rife with contradictions and asymmetries of power and privilege" (p. 69). These contradictions, which are ever present, situate the teacher and student in a dialectical relationship. The dialectical nature of critical theory enables the educational researcher to see the school not simply as an arena of social indoctrination or a site of instruction, but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment (McLaren, p. 70).

bell hooks (1994) suggests that "when education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess" (p. 21). In an effort to better educate, the educator must take a critical look at himself or herself to ascertain where or who they are in this scope. hooks hypothesizes further that, "any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process" (p. 21). By engaging in a pedagogical process that incorporates various musics of their student's cultural backgrounds, the music educator begins to embrace the concept of music as "a lived experience, not just a school experience alone" (Froehlich, p. 118).

In the text *Critical Pedagogies: Notes from the Real World*, Joan Wink (2000) reflects on her position as an educator and the contradictions held within educational spheres. Wink writes on her contact with a student who possessed an inability to read.

> Jonathan is a contradiction in my educational space. My observations of Jon teach me that:
> I must continually challenge my long-held assumptions;
> I must let practice inform my theory;
> I must continually build theory that informs my practice;
> I must find new answers or new questions;
> I must grapple with multiple ways of knowing;
> I must listen, learn, reflect, and act (p. 15).

Wink states further,

> From Paulo Freire and others, I have learned that we all have contradictions in our educational spaces. We all are experiencing fundamental change. We even have oppositional voices in our educational spaces. The trick is to learn from the contradictions, from the change, from the opposite (p. 15).

So, what can be learned through the infusion of Hip Hop into mainstream curriculum? In my view, education is a lifelong process of discovery. As educators we must present novel ways of addressing life's challenges. In preparation for the world outside of the classroom educators have to make meaningful connections between the classroom and that world. For example, the way Run DMC crafts their rhymes in a rhythmic articulation combined with slight pitch inflections illustrates a practical application of musical terms as identified in the traditional curriculum that may seem foreign to students whose cultural musical expressions fall outside of these euro-structured traditions. The student, through the act of listening to Run and DMC knows what they do, just doesn't know what it is called in the context of traditional musical standards. By relating this external experience to the knowledge posited in the classroom, connections begin to take shape. To further illustrate an example of how to bridge the gap between the canon and students cultural capital, Morrell & Duncan-Andrade (2002) offer a classroom unit with the following three objectives:

1. to utilize our students' involvement with Hip-hop culture to scaffold the critical and analytical skills that they already possess

2. to provide students with the awareness and confidence they need to transfer these skills into/onto the literary texts from the canon

3. to enable students to critique the messages sent to them through the popular cultural media that permeate their everyday lives (p. 90).

Morrell & Duncan-Andrade begin the lesson by giving an overview of poetry and the role of the poet in society. As a tool in music education one thought would be to take this same approach to introduce the art of song writing, making further interdisciplinary connections

with music and other subjects. Morrell & Duncan-Andrade further expound on their methodologies.

> We emphasized the importance of understanding the historical period in which a poem was written to come to a deeper interpretation of the poem. In the introductory lecture, we outlined all of the historical/literary periods that would be covered in the unit (Elizabethan, Puritan Revolution, Romantic and Metaphysical Poets from England, Civil War, Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Movement, and Post-Industrial Revolution in the United States). It was our intention to place Hip-hop music—as a post-industrial art form—right alongside these other historical periods and poems so that the students would be able to use a period and genre of poetry they were familiar with as a lens with which to examine the other literary works and also to encourage the students to reevaluate the manner in which they view elements of their popular culture (p. 90).

In making connections to my study—discussing Hip Hop as a post-industrial form, the Architects of Hip Hop's narratives provide primary source information—giving an authentic historical insight to the period. Within their findings, Morrell & Duncan-Andrade illustrate student's ability to make interpretations and connections between the canonical poems and rap texts. "For instance, one group articulated that both
Grand Master Flash and T.S. Eliot gazed out into their rapidly deteriorating societies and saw a "wasteland." Both poets were essentially apocalyptic in nature as they witnessed death, disease, and decay. Also, both poems talk about a message, indicating the role of a poet in society as a messenger or prophet" (p. 91).

As a second example, to teach the literary element of imagery, Sitomer and Cirelli (2004) employ Notorious B.I.G's (Biggie) "Juicy" (Combs, M'Tume, Oliver, & Wallace, 1994, track 10).

> It was all a dream
> I used to read Word Up magazine
> Salt 'n' Pepa and Heavy D up in the limousine
> Hangin' pictures on my wall
> Every Saturday Rap Attack, Mr. Magic, Marley Marl

We used to fuss when the landlord dissed us
No heat, wonder why Christmas missed us
Birthdays was the worst days
Now we sip champagne when we thirst-ay
Uh, damn right I like the life I live
'Cause I went from negative to positive
And it's all...

Within the text of the song Biggie pays homage to Hip-Hop pioneers by illustrating how they inspired him to want to improve his condition. He also gets into the details of growing up in the [neighbor] hood. In an effort to further engage the learner in each poetic work Sitomer and Cirelli pose questions to foster critical thinking. For example: The artist claims that birthdays were the worst days. Why do you think he felt this way? This line of questioning gives the student the opportunity to be an expert of the subject matter. This culturally responsive adaptation also seeks to address the concern that "all students are *miseducated* to the extent that they receive only a partial and biased education. The primary victims of biased education are those who are invisible in the curriculum" (Nieto, 2002, p. 37). The Hip Hop pedagogy as developed and illustrated in this dissertation seeks to construct a concrete visibility of students considered 'on the margins' through what is taught and how that information is disseminated.

Final Thoughts

For music educators, critical pedagogy seeks to break down the barriers that exist between the music students hear outside the classroom and the music their teachers want them to learn (Abrahams, 2008, p. 225). Hanley, Brown, Jay, and Clemons (2005), serves as an illustration of the effective use of infusing Hip Hop into the classroom. To assist in the

formulation of my position it is necessary to employ a few key points from this work. Hanley et al., (2005) examine the experiences of White female teachers and Black Hip Hop artists working collaboratively to plan and implement instruction within elementary school classrooms through a case study. Qualitative inquiry found the frequent thematic occurrence of artistic agency and active engagement.

> Student work samples illustrated the manipulation of language as a means of expanding their current knowledge. As a part of their experience with the artists, students wrote their own raps reflecting personal experiences. In doing so, students applied concepts of iambic pentameter and prose in a creative, culturally enriching environment. The public performance of these raps provided opportunities for affirmation of personal experience. Hip-hop became the bridge to connect curriculum with students' experiences and ways of knowing. (p. 3)

This study illuminates two distinct implications for research and future study. In the area of teacher education, Hip Hop pedagogy challenges, as Green (2005) notes, autonomy of classical music as posited in pre-service music education programs. This autonomy carries over into the curriculum of K-12 education and presents a disconnect between the knowledge children bring into the classroom and the skills and knowledge as espoused by the standard curriculum. It would be most beneficial to the practice of music education to explore the ways in which teacher education programs cultivate an environment that encourages the teaching of music through various cultural perspectives. The second and probably most important implication for future study is the incorporation of music education with Elliott's (1995) praxial methodology. As I noted in earlier chapters my experiences as both student and educator was rooted in the aesthetic tradition. Elliott's (1995) philosophical stance encourages music education for all students as a performance based subject. Musical understanding is developed through our ability to 'do' music. What ever that doing is—it

represents a type musical 'understanding' rooted in cultural practices that are not regularly incorporated into 'what' and 'how' music is taught in the American musical classroom.

To use this dissertation effectively as a tool in the musical classroom, the educator must possess a willingness to embrace non-western musics and elements of popular culture as a source for musical understanding. When taken into context of the music curriculum, the ideologies of the Hip Hop pedagogy follow a distinct path of musicianship through an act of doing. According to Elliott, "a person can evidence his or her level of musicianship in several ways: by performing, improvising, composing, arranging, and/or conducting (all of which involve listening)" (p. 70). In chapter two, I explored how the act of creation in Hip Hop is evidenced through one or more of Elliott's levels of musical knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, I contend that the act of producing (sampling/beat making) in Hip Hop is a concrete example of performing, improvising, composing, arranging, and/or conducting in context. A 2007 MENC task force on National Standards reported:

> A student population diverse in its musical interests and talents requires a music curriculum diverse in its offerings. In a comprehensive and balanced program, each student should be able to exert his or her individuality in making musical choices that are tailored to his or her desires and needs (MENC, 2007).

The Hip Hop pedagogy seeks to address students' cultural experiences, interests, and talents to provide a more inclusive learning environment in the music classroom. This work is the beginning of what I hope to be a lifelong process of discovering alternative pedagogical methods that bring to light the vast knowledge that students of color possess as well as the musical practices that are present with their various cultural spheres.

As I continue with this work my own assumptions and previously held ideologies will also come into question. I am not seeking to develop a one-size fits all approach to educating

children of color. I merely want to show educators how to utilize their student's prior frames of reference in creating meaningful instructional programming. The Hip Hop pedagogical approach is largely based on the combination of what I refer to as Intellectual Capacity and Intellectual Drive. Intellectual Capacity is simply one's abilities. In Gardner's words we all possess a set of eight intelligences that include: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. According to Gardner (1999) intelligence is conceptualized "as a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (p. 33-4). In short, we all have an "intellectual capacity". Intellectual Drive is the desire to use one's abilities to solve problems. The Hip Hop pedagogy seeks to illustrate the activities and experiences children of color bring into the classroom as intellectual and therefore reinforcing the notion that they are "already smart". This culturally responsive approach highlights one's *intellectual capacity* toward the end of fostering *intellectual drive*.

APPENDIX A

Architects of Hip Hop Series Abstract

The Architects of Hip Hop is a 30-minute broadcast and DVD expose series that chronicles the life before, during and after a Hip Hop Artist journey to stardom as well as accomplishments that have contributed to the international success of Hip Hop music and it's culture. Solely focusing on the grass roots years and successful efforts of those in Hip-Hop from the early 1980s to the late 1990s. DJs, Producers and Rappers are in candid "pull no punches" interviews that reveal what it took to accomplish, sustain, then choosing-to or reluctantly leaving the high life to readjust to what has become their life today.

Many of these artists have become great parents, community leaders, business owners, producers, etc. Some have gained wisdom through life's hard knocks as well. We will acknowledge, interview and pay tribute to Hip-Hop music's pioneers. Showing how each one of their individual hits helped propel Hip-Hop music to where we know it today. Through the classic music, memorable images and footage—with thorough research—the series takes the viewer down memory lane and reminding them of key moments in Hip-Hop history that changed and saved many lives. The 30-minute expose will finally give these artists another opportunity to tell their story, in their own words, in their own way. The pilot series will chronicle the lives of six Hip Hop artists.

The series will seek to achieve the following objectives:
1. Educating the viewer about the origin of Hip-Hop music and the culture.
2. Promoting what the featured artist is currently doing.
3. Beginning the visual and audible fusion of new school and old school energy.
4. Soundtrack / compilation album

The Architects of Hip Hop abstract was provided by Christopher “Play” Martin.

APPENDIX B

Architects of Hip Hop Interview Questions

The Architects of Hip Hop interviews included (but not limited to) the following questions:

- Tell me something about yourself? Where are you from?
- Tell me a little about growing up in_____. What was life like in those days?
- What school(s) did you attend growing up?
- Were you involved in the arts (music, visual art, dance or drama) while in school?
- How did you come into contact with Hip Hop? What are your earliest memories of Hip Hop?
- As one of Hip Hop's pioneers, can you speak about some of the early influences on its creation?
- What (if any) were some of the traditions of early Hip Hop?
- What has been your involvement with Hip Hop? (as an artist: DJ, MC, B-Boy/Girl, Graffiti Writer, producer, etc.)
- Where do the ideas (creativity) come from?
- What does your form of expression say about you? What does it say about Hip Hop?
- Is there a difference between rap and Hip Hop?
- Do you think of Hip Hop as a culture? How? Why?
- How do you feel about the stereotypes surrounding Hip Hop? (Negative or positive)
- How do you feel about the current state of Hip Hop?

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